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The intern and the secretary

Paying for their devotion

Women, G2 pages 4-5



Red alert

A cure for chronic blushing

Health, G2 page 10



Home and away

Boarding school is back in style

Education, G2 pages 12-13

G7 acts on global crisis

Concerted move to cut interest rates

Alex Brummer and Mark Atkinson

THE world's leading industrial countries last night set the stage for an international cut in interest rates after President Clinton warned that the global economy is confronting with "the biggest financial challenge facing the world in a half century".

The extraordinary change in policy from fighting inflation to stimulating growth by the leading industrial countries came last night after a series of meetings from London to Basel and Washington designed to bring an end to the deepening crisis in world markets.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, current chairman of the G7 finance ministers, leaves for Japan today to press for concerted action by the authorities to stimulate growth and clean up the banking system in the world's second largest economy.

In their unprecedented intervention, the Group of Seven finance ministers and central bankers signalled a new approach to dealing with their own economies and those of the developing countries.

The prospect of lower interest rates and emergency measures to shore up the crumbling financial markets sent the FTSE in London up 150 points and added more than 200 points to the Dow Jones in New York.

Emerging markets which like Malaysia sought to go it alone by imposing capital controls were censured by the

Government bond yields

Country	Yield
US	5.50
UK	6.50
France	4.50
Germany	4.50
Japan	1.25

G7 and told that such action would "hurt prospects for their own economies and the world system".

The G7 also rounded on traders in the world's financial markets, and accused dealers of being irrational and not making a distinction between those countries "carrying out strong macro-economic policies" and those operating more irresponsible regimes.

Last night's was a prelude to an emergency gathering of G8 leaders, including Russia, at which a report outlining proposals for putting the Russian economy back on track will be discussed.

The crisis in Moscow, coming hard on the heels of the Asian meltdown, has delivered a sharp blow to the economies of Latin America, with Brazil raising its interest rates to 50 per cent in an effort to protect its currency, the real.

The G7 said that in the West the emphasis will now be on boosting demand rather than worrying about rising

prices, while in the developing countries the International Monetary Fund was ordered to shift towards "growth-orientated policies". The IMF has been widely criticised for the East Asian and Russian crises with its emphasis on fiscal austerity and monetary discipline which have contributed to a downward economic spiral.

The World Bank has also been asked to step up its interventions to "alleviate the effects of the crisis on the poorest segments of society." The bank, which lends more than \$20 billion a year, has been seen as too passive in the current crisis.

In Indonesia, output has plunged more than 14 per cent. In Korea and Thailand it has fallen by 8 per cent.

The financial leaders acknowledged that the IMF is running out of money and there is little prospect of Congress releasing the US's share of proposed cash injection which would raise the IMF's capital from \$200 billion to \$250 billion.

In response to this the G7 - US, Japan, Germany, France, UK, Italy, and Canada - underlined its determination to deal with the worsening situation in Latin America by activating an emergency fund known as the General Arrangements to Borrow, last used to prop up the pound in 1976.

Mr Clinton, in a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, called upon his Treasury Secretary, Robert Rubin, and the most powerful central banker in the world, Alan Greenspan of the Federal Reserve, to hold an urgent meeting with their counterparts within 30 days.

In London, Tony Blair is floating the idea of a heads of government summit to deal with the crisis.

Read on brink, page 7; Leader comment, page 9; FTSE to markets, and City Notebook, page 12

Read my lips 'you greedy bastards'



Seamus Milne and Michael White

PPRIVATE sector bosses who award themselves inflated pay increases are "greedy bastards," the TUC president, John Edmonds, said yesterday in a sweeping denunciation of what he

called the "rightwing time warp" afflicting the Government's policy.

His remarks came on the first day of the TUC conference in Blackpool, where the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, rejected union leaders' warnings that Britain was on the brink of recession,

with a possible 300,000 job losses in manufacturing - and taunted that Labour government policies represent little change from its Tory predecessors.

Mr Edmonds said fat cats of industry were "bloated rodents" who had fostered a "politics of the pig trough" in the boardroom.

Referring to the Virgin boss and friend of New Labour, Richard Branson, he asked: "What did the privatisation of the railways teach us, other than that you need more than a beard, an open-necked shirt and a failed diploma in ballooning to make trains run on time?" While acknowledging job

losses at the Siemens and Fujitsu factories, Mr Prescott warned against undermining economic confidence with talk of a recession. "It is simply not true." "Don't try and tell me that it is all to do with the pound and British interest rates."

PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY PHILLIPS

Viagra banned from NHS prescription

Mixed reception for temporary move while 'huge' cost assessed

Sarah Bosley Health Correspondent

VIAGRA, the impotence pill that thousands of couples hope will transform their lives, was banned from prescription on the NHS by the Government yesterday, just days before it is due to be licensed in Britain.

The statement by Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, broke new ground in the fraught debate over rationing in the NHS. It is the first time the Government has banned a medicine proven to work for large numbers of people with a serious medical complaint.

There was an outcry from some doctors with desperate patients hoping Viagra can change their lives, but apoplexy from other health professionals at the Government's apparent willingness to face up to the rationing problem, rather than push the decision on to individual health authorities, with the

result of "prescription by postcode". Mr Dobson said the measure was temporary while the Government decided what to do about the potentially huge bill to the NHS. Estimates of \$1 billion have been lowered recently to between \$50 million and \$100 million, although there are fears that abuse could push the cost far higher.

But there were signs this could herald a radical change in the Government's approach to the rationing of medicines. A letter to doctors and other health professionals said Viagra "raises issues about the priority which should be given to the treatment of erectile dysfunction (impotence) under the NHS". This suggests the Government may be willing to look rationing in the face and make hard choices in a way it has not done in the past.

The NHS Confederation was delighted Mr Dobson had grasped the Viagra nettle. Stephen Thornton, its chief



executive, praised the Government's openness. "It is right for the Secretary of State to issue guidance to clinicians and health service managers about how the drug should be rationed. This is a bold step considering all the media hype there has been over this drug. At last we know where we stand."

If some people are to get Viagra while others are not, because of their age, lifestyle or other reason, then the Gov-

ernment, and not doctors, must make the ruling, he said.

Doctors whose patients have been eagerly awaiting the arrival of Viagra were not happy with the Government's "stalling". Roger Kirby, a consultant urologist at St George's Hospital in London and honorary secretary of the British Association of Urological Surgeons, said: "I have queues of patients, hoping this week will restore a side of their lives and their marriage, who will be very disappointed. I think Mr Dobson will find this very difficult to explain away."

"Why does the NHS treat patients with migraine or period pains or headaches, but if you are impotent as a result of diabetes or prostate cancer you can't get treatment? Why should Frank Dobson make these decisions on behalf of the taxpayer? If I were a lady married to a diabetic man who was impotent, I would be feeling very upset now."

Ian Bogle, chairman of the British Medical Association's council, said the publicity about Viagra would have increased the expectations of the

impotent. "Therefore I regret the postponement of a decision about the use of Viagra in the NHS. What is now required is a very clear decision from ministers, based on evidence and professional advice, as soon as possible about Viagra's availability on the NHS as this may have significant implications for doctors." The Impotence Association regretted the delay. "A lot of people are genuinely suffering and now they will have to wait another month until the Government make their final decision," said its director, Ann Craig.

But Professor Howard Jacobs, from University College London Medical School and the Society for Endocrinology, said while he would like Viagra to be on the NHS, he commented on the openness and transparency of the Government's stance. "Few people object to rationing when the need can be perceived and when it is equitable, but everyone is outraged by rationing when it makes no sense," he said.

Spectre of NHS rationing, page 4; Leader comment, page 9

Clinton in two-front fight to save his presidency

Martin Kettle and Andrew Marr in Washington

BILL Clinton's fight against impeachment shifted decisively from the legal to the political arena yesterday, with the White House moving to strengthen its frontline team on Capitol Hill and the president launching a high-profile drive to show Americans he is capable of "doing the nation's business".

His fresh attempt to take control of the public agenda came amid continuing signs of behind-the-scenes manoeuvring in Washington, aimed at

securing a compromise with Congress in which Mr Clinton would retain office and accept a motion of censure and other punishments.

Mr Clinton is expected to appoint a new "ambassador" to Capitol Hill this week to try and broker a political deal with the Republican-dominated Congress that would be acceptable to all parties.

White House sources said the appointment was likely to go to a senior state department official, Greg Craig, Mr Craig has an impressive legal and political track record at the heart of Washington and is described as "a very experi-

enced operator". Mr Craig is currently in charge of policy planning at the state department, and was a former lawyer at the Washington firm in which David Kendall, the president's lawyer, is a senior partner, as well as a former congressional aide to Senator Edward Kennedy.

Others who have been mentioned in connection with the turn to page 3, column 4

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The Clinton crisis

'I've been disappointed and hurt. But the president genuinely and sincerely apologised to me and I have accepted his apology'

Erskine Bowles,
chief of staff

Power brokers who will tell

KEY PLAYERS: Half a dozen Democrats 'in grey suits' are the men who now hold the ring, Jonathan Freedland reports

WHEN the end came in 1974, it was the men in suits who delivered the news.

Richard Nixon knew his time in the White House was up when Senator Barry Goldwater, Republican party chairman Bob Dole and a clutch of other party elders tapped him on the shoulder and asked him to leave the stage.

Popular support had cratered, they said. The House would vote for impeachment and the Senate would convict. The president had just one option left: resignation.

But who are the men in suits today? Who are the Democratic greybeards who could make the short drive along Pennsylvania Avenue from Capitol Hill to the White House and tell Bill Clinton to give up the job he craved his entire life? Who are the key party power brokers currently struggling to find an alternative solution — a compromise which might rebuke the president but keep him in the Oval Office?

They are a half dozen men, some in the House, some in the Senate, one now retired from elected politics altogether. Their task is not to save Bill Clinton so much as to save the Democratic Party — which faces House, Senate and gubernatorial elections in two months' time. If that means the president has to make the ultimate sacrifice, they will be the ones to tell him. Not that they can be certain he will listen.

First among them would be Tom Daschle, the diminutive senator from South Dakota and the Democrats' leader in the upper chamber. He has a

good relationship with the White House, partly because he has no ambitions for higher political office and is therefore free of ulterior motives — a rare delight in Washington.

Advice from him would be weighed heavily: after all, it is Mr Daschle who would act as unofficial foreman of the Democratic members of the "jury" in any impeachment trial, conducted in the Senate. With 67 votes needed for conviction in the 100-member body, Bill Clinton could survive so long as he keeps his own senators on side. That task would partly fall on the member for South Dakota.

His counterpart in the House is much less trusted. Minority Leader Dick Gephardt is a perennial presiden-



Dick Gephardt represents the religious, socially conservative heart of the heartland

tial hopeful who sought the Democratic nomination in 1988 and plans to run again — against Vice President Al Gore — in 2000.

"If he looked Clinton in the eye and said he should step

down, I think Clinton would tell him to fuck off," admitted one senior White House official yesterday. "Both think the other guy's out to do them down."

Yet Mr Gephardt's support

is crucial, since the House is where impeachment proceedings begin. Clintonites hope the Congressman will calculate that his own 2000 chances are better served with the president staying in office, rather than Mr Gore taking over.

They are braced for some moralistic noises, however: Mr Gephardt represents a socially conservative, religiously-minded district of St. Louis, Missouri — heart of the heartland.

A key factor in Mr Gephardt's deliberations will be the mid-term elections. Before the Lewinsky scandal, Democrats believed they had a chance of regaining their majority in the House, thereby making Mr Gephardt the new Speaker. Few har-

bour that hope now, fearing that Democrats will stay at home while Republicans on the religious right will flock to the polls to punish a sinful president. But they are short on strategies for recovery.

If Mr Clinton stays in office, then Monicagate drowns out the Democrats' messages on healthcare or education spending, turning November into a referendum on the Starr report.

If he goes, then Democrats are tainted along with him — and still the scandal dominates the news.

Besides the minority leader, three other Democratic players on the Hill will be pivotal.

In the Senate, Joe Lieberman and Bob Kerrey matter. The former set the crisis tone

Inner circle buries its resentment and rallies again to the leader

WHITE HOUSE: Clinton's aides and ministers have forgiven their chief his deceit and their sense of betrayal, writes Mark Tran

KEY members of President Clinton's entourage are sticking by him although he deliberately misled them on his trysts with Monica Lewinsky.

Several put their reputations on the line by standing by the president when he denied any inappropriate relationship with the White House intern. Secretary of state Madeleine Albright was the first cabinet member to step up to the microphone to back Bill Clinton after his initial denial. Mrs Albright again stepped into the breach when the Starr report came out.

Saying that it was a "sad and difficult time," Mrs Albright called Mr Clinton's actions "wrong and so were his statements in misleading the American people and the cabinet" about the affair. But she noted that Mr Clinton had apologised to the cabinet and the people "and I accept his apology." Mrs Albright went on to say that she could not do her job if she did not "have full confidence in the president's ability to make sound judgments and confidence in his leadership. And I think that he's doing a great job leading the country."

Other White House officials have made their peace with the president, putting aside any hurt and humiliation to get on with the job of running the country. Aides appear to have adopted the attitude of most Americans, separating Mr Clinton's personal behaviour from his politics and policies.

Erskine Bowles, the chief of staff, said he had come to terms with the president's deception. "I've been disappointed and hurt," he said in a statement. "But the president genuinely and sincerely apologised to me and I have accepted his apology. I am going to continue for as long as I am here to carry out his policies, which I believe have been extraordinarily good for the country. None of us are all good, or all bad."

Mr Bowles's forgiveness comes despite his strong endorsement of the president during his deposition before the grand jury. He testified that he took the president's statements seriously. "All I can tell you is: this guy who I've worked for looked me in the eye and said he did not have sexual relationships with her. And if I didn't be-

lieve him I couldn't stay. So I believe him."

Sidney Blumenthal, assistant to the president, was one of Mr Clinton's staunchest defenders, commonly referred to as the White House attack dog by Republicans. When Mr Clinton was being called a liar, Mr Blumenthal yielded to no one in upholding the



Betty Currie (left), the president's secretary, helped him and Lewinsky arrange their meetings, Starr alleges

president's truthfulness. In his testimony to the grand jury, Mr Blumenthal said he "certainly believed his story, he was pouring out his heart and I believed him."

Now that the truth is out, Mr Blumenthal is said to feel betrayed, but he too intends to soldier on for Mr Clinton. "I'm not here to make public judgments about the president's life. I'm here to work

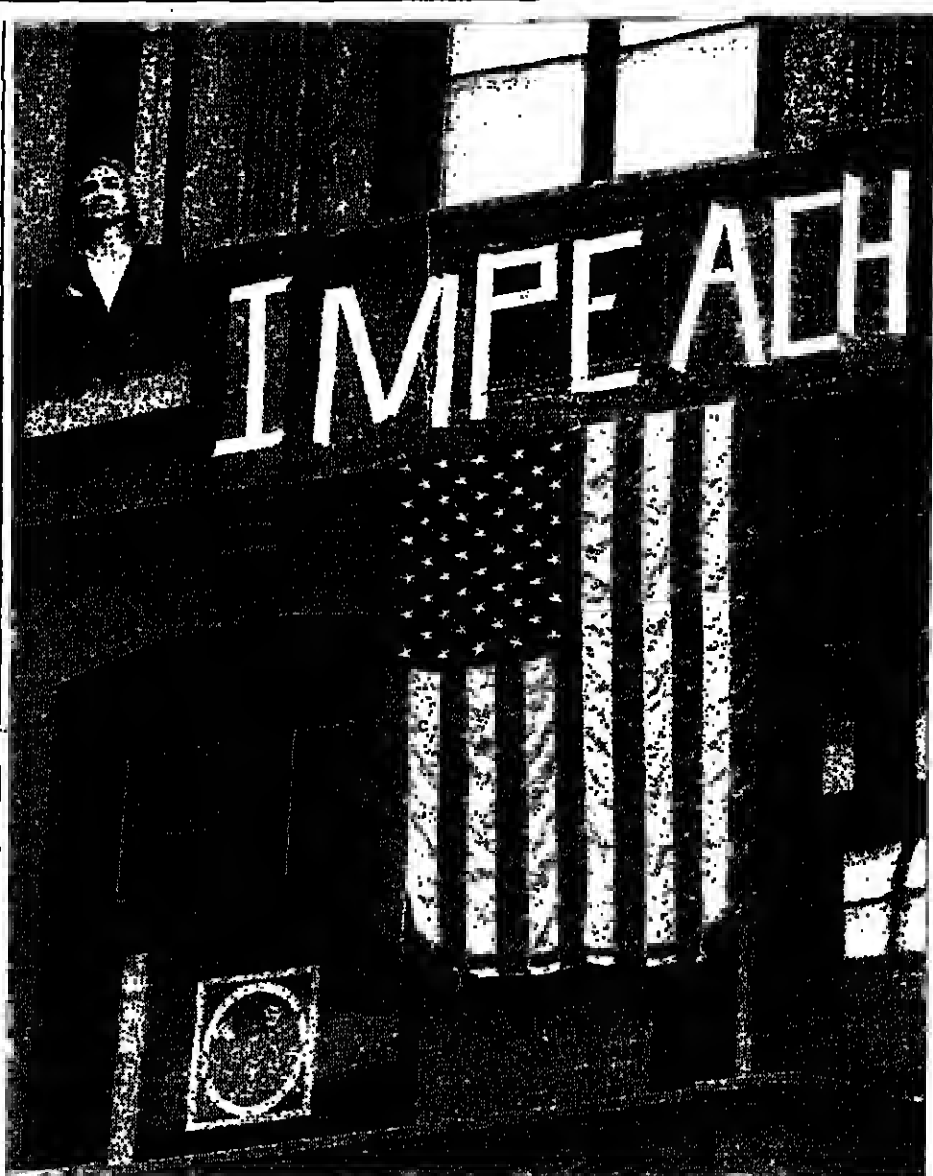
on the important issues on his agenda."

Other members of Mr Clinton's entourage, according to the Starr report, knew very well what was going on and tried to help out the president anyway. His golf buddy Vernon Jordan, who tried to get Ms Lewinsky a job with Revlon and other companies, de-

clined at one point he said to her: "You're in love, that's what your problem is." When she denied that they were having sex, she said she assumed Mr Jordan knew "with a wink and a nod that she was having a relationship with the president."

Betty Currie, Mr Clinton's personal secretary, also is portrayed by the Starr report as being much more in the know than at first thought. Mrs Currie initially emerged as one of the innocent victims in the affair, a loyal aide forced to rack up large legal bills through no fault of her own. But Mrs Currie, according to the Starr report, was more of a willing accomplice to Mr Clinton's cavortings than a hapless bystander.

After the president and the intern began their affair, Mrs Currie helped to arrange their clandestine meetings and often helped Ms Lewinsky to bypass the system designed to keep track of all presidential visitors. Mrs Currie even went to the White House on her days off solely to admit Ms Lewinsky to the Oval Office for meetings alone with Mr Clinton, according to her sworn testimony and that of Ms Lewinsky. Mrs Currie also allowed herself to be used as the cover story for future visits by Ms Lewinsky, who would tell security guards that she was at the White House to see Mr Clinton's personal secretary.



A protest in Park Avenue, New York, close to the Council of Foreign Relations building, where Mr Clinton was making a speech yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: PETER MORGAN

Strange case of the president and the woman who asked for a glass of water

ANOTHER WOMAN: Rumour is met with scepticism as women voters grant the benefit of the doubt, Julian Borger reports

THE young woman videotaped in the Oval Office reaching out to mop the presidential brow and then accompanying Bill Clinton to his private study was described by a White House official as a family friend from Arkansas, who had asked for a glass of water.

The president was just showing her the way, the official, P.J. Crowley, said.

Hints that Monica Lewinsky may be followed by claims of other dangerous liaisons are embedded in the Starr report's account of the president's affair with the White House intern.

When Mr Clinton declared the end of their sexual relationship in May last year, he allegedly told her he had

been unfaithful to Hillary "hundreds of times" but had earnestly been trying to turn over a new leaf since entering middle age.

Last December, Ms Lewinsky stormed out of the White House after hearing that the president was busy entertaining Eleanor Mondale, a CBS reporter and the daughter of the former Democratic presidential hopeful, Walter Mondale. The report's footnotes mention that Ms Lewinsky was suspicious that the two were having an affair.

Rumours of more to come have been buzzing around Washington for weeks, but have yet to take concrete form. Yesterday, the only account of the "second intern" video in the major news-

papers was buried on page 6 of the New York Post.

Even if proof is produced, it is unclear whether further Lewinsky-style revelations could administer a coup de grace to the Clinton presidency. Opinion polls yesterday seemed to indicate that even presidential scandal — the latest of diminishing returns when it comes to popular outrage, particularly among American women.

Joanne Wells, a 63-year-old African-American grandmother, boiled it down to a hard-headed equation: "He's done more for women than he's done to women. So he's still ahead on points," she said while on a shopping trip down Connecticut Avenue.

America's women put Bill Clinton in office and for the time being they seem prepared to keep him there. According to a poll published yesterday in the Washington Post, only 25 per cent of US women questioned were in favour of impeachment, compared with 56 per cent of men.

After overcoming their initial shock at the explicit nature of the Starr report, most Clinton supporters, especially women, have declared themselves underwhelmed by the claims of substantive criminal wrongdoing.

Jung Lee, a 22-year-old sales assistant in a women's clothes shop, said: "Starr couldn't find anything like Watergate after all this time, so he exploited this thing with Monica Lewinsky."

Ms Lee said she had not read the report but in all the discussion over the affair she had heard, there was nothing to suggest sexual harassment. "This was consensual sex between two adults," she said. And if there is more to come? "Well, if it's more of the same, what's the difference?"

Aware that women voters were likely to outnumber male voters significantly in 1996, Mr Clinton focused on social issues like welfare and legislation affecting the family, during his re-election campaign. He won 54 per cent

of women's votes compared with 43 per cent of men's. Mr Clinton has made a string of high-profile female appointments, including Janet Reno and Madeleine Albright, who respectively became the first woman attorney general and secretary of state in US history. He defended abortion rights in the face of repeated attempts to limit them by his Republican rivals. During the economic boom of recent years, women have filled 64 per cent of the new jobs created.

It seems likely that Bill Clinton would have to commit a sin of a different order of magnitude to really shake the pillar which has so far kept him in office. Until then, any new sex allegations seem as likely to rebound on the president's accusers as on the man himself.

"They should never have put it in the papers or on the TV, where my grandchildren can see it," said Mrs Wells. "I blame the people who did that to us."



Matt Drudge: a far cry from the dustbin

Dishing the e-dirt on Bill

WHENEVER something breaks, according to Matt Drudge, "I go where the stink is."

That sums up the 30-year-old's approach to news and it has made him a minor celebrity, now a familiar figure on television with his own show, where he appears wearing his trademark dark hat.

It is a long way from when he used to rummage around the dustbins of Daily Variety, a paper that

covers Hollywood. Drudge spends most of his time in a cluttered Hollywood apartment. Relying on what he calls word-of-mouth, he gets from e-mail tipsters, he speed-dials around the country, then writes up his stories, then writes up his stories.

His success, he says, comes from his no-holds-barred attitude. "It's a gotcha sheet in a town where nobody is playing gotcha."

Mr Drudge, only son of a social worker father and an attorney mother, barely

finished high school — "bad grammar, bad spelling."

He charges \$10 a year for his Drudge Report, which he also posts on the web (www.drudgereport.com) every few days. He started the report in 1995 and quickly won a following.

Rush Limbaugh, the right-wing TV personality, dubbed him the "Rush Limbaugh of the Internet" because of his penchant for Clinton bashing.

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The Clinton crisis

the president if his time is up

of the month with a heartfelt speech on the senate floor, in which he castigated his old friend Mr Clinton for behaviour that was not just inappropriate but immoral.

Senator Lieberman, an observant Jew regarded as a Mr Clean figure on the Hill, carries moral weight in the Democratic Party but also political muscle.

He has been an ally of Mr Clinton's since 1970, and the two men were co-founders of the Democratic Leadership Council, the modernising body which dragged the party from the unelectable left to the vote-grabbing centre. The two men were partners in birthing the New Democrats, much as Tony Blair and Gordon Brown created New Labour.

For Bill Clinton to lose Joe Lieberman would be to lose the Clinton wing of the Democratic Party. To win the senator's approval — say, for the proposed censure motion now gaining ground as a punishment short of impeachment — would be a valuable boost to the Clinton rescue operation.

Mr Kerrey is important, too. The Nebraska senator with movie-star looks has credibility where Mr Clinton does not: his personal life is unblemished and he was a hero in the Vietnam war. When he challenged Mr Clinton for the presidential nomination in 1992, his strengths only highlighted Mr Clinton's weaknesses.

Since then Mr Kerrey has become a power in the party,

chairing the Democrats' campaign effort in this year's Senate contests.

His backing would bring the support of other senators, as well as a shot of Lieberman-style moral endorsement voters would be encouraged to think. "If Bill Clinton's good enough for a goody-goody like Bob Kerrey, then he's good enough for me." With his own ambitions for 2000, he, too, is hardly anxious to see the overnight promotion of Al Gore.

The last Congressional player is John Conyers. A black-American congressman is outside the inner circle of Democratic grandees. But he is the most senior Democrat on the House judiciary committee



which will decide Mr Clinton's initial fate. Now 69, he is regarded as one of the wiser, cooler heads in the House, with the extra kudos of being the only member of the committee to have

To win Joe Lieberman's approval would be a boost to the rescue operation

long haul. The last of the men in suits no longer holds elected office. He is George Mitchell, Tom Daschle's predecessor as Democratic leader in the Senate. As Mr Clinton's envoy to Northern Ireland, successfully brokering the Good Friday Agreement, he won plaudits around the world, adding to the almost universal respect he enjoys in Washington.

Few men are admired more in the capital, where he is seen as a deal-maker extraordinaire with an added reputation for integrity. If he were to tell Mr Clinton to do the honourable thing, it is hard to see how the president could resist.

Instead, Mr Mitchell appears to be being mentioned in an opposite role. The White

House was seeking an "ambassador" last night, an emissary who would present the Clinton case to the Hill and work for a reprieve.

Congressional veteran George Mitchell would be some people's choice. A sign of headway appeared yesterday, when the name above an official White House response to a USA Today editorial demanding Mr Clinton's resignation was none other than George Mitchell.

Important though all these men are, there are a couple of caveats. For one thing, it may be Republicans, not Democrats, who prove decisive. As the majority party in both houses, it's the likes of Senator Trent Lott, Speaker Newt Gingrich, House judiciary chair Henry Hyde, and his

Senate counterpart Orrin Hatch, who may ultimately hold Mr Clinton's career in their hands.

Secondly, insiders wonder if the whole notion of men in suits works in the Washington of 1998 in quite the way it did in 1974. Times have changed, the party machines now exert much less influence than before. According to that senior White House official, it's not a tap on the shoulder from the eminences grises of the Democratic Party which would make Bill Clinton quit. "There would have to be a massive haemorrhaging of public support," in this era of instant and constant polling, he says. It is voters, not party barons, who matter. "They are the elders now."

Partisan passions will play key role

CONGRESS: The president's fate hangs on the Republican dominated judiciary committee, writes **Martin Kettle**

ASSUMING that President Clinton does not resign abruptly in the next few days — and there is little sign of him doing that — there are two main scenarios for bringing his crisis to an end.

There is a fast scenario and a slow scenario. In the first, the crisis is concluded before the House of Representatives votes for a formal impeachment inquiry — in other words, this month. In the slow scenario, the House begins its inquiry and Washington is dominated by months of hearings and reports, culminating in a conclusion in spring 1999.

Either way, the pivotal constitutional role will be played by the House of Representatives' judiciary committee. It must decide, probably by the end of the month, whether the report of the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, constitutes grounds for an impeachment inquiry.

The signs are that it will vote for an inquiry unless the White House and Capitol Hill broker a rapid plea bargain of the sort that is being discussed in Washington this week. Such a plea bargain, in which Mr Clinton remains president but accepts congressional censure and other punishments, is not impossible in the slow scenario. But it would probably be more difficult to achieve.

In any event, the judiciary committee will now become the focus of legal and political debate in Washington in the coming weeks. Its chairman, Henry Hyde, believes a full inquiry, including hearings, is warranted. "I must say I do, but I want to hear from every one on the committee," he said on Sunday.

The full House is scheduled to vote this week on procedures to govern the judiciary committee's review of the Starr report. That vote, expected tomorrow, would issue rules concerning the power to subpoena witnesses — including Mr Clinton — and other aspects of the committee's evidence-gathering process.

The committee must report

eral federal employees and presidential aides who have outstanding claims before the supreme court in which they argue they should not be compelled to testify. The material also includes 27 tapes of conversations with Mr Lewinsky taken secretly by Linda Tripp in 1997 and early January 1998.

The key vote to establish an inquiry is likely to be around the same time that the committee reports on what to do about the supporting material. That vote will first be taken by the committee, and must then be upheld by a majority of the House's 435 members. The expectation in Washington is that the committee will vote before Congress adjourns on October 9, but it is possible that the House will need to be summoned back to Washington in its recess to vote.

Although the initial handling of the Starr report by Mr Hyde and his Democratic counterpart, John Conyers,

The judiciary committee has been in the front line of Republican attempts to roll back many liberal laws of the 1960s

suggested a conscientious attempt to achieve a non-partisan atmosphere in which the judiciary committee could work, the committee has a reputation as one of Congress's most polarised standing bodies. These qualities could be decisive in its deliberations, as well as in determining the chances of a compromise.

Twenty-one of the committee's 37 members, including Mr Hyde, are Republicans. The committee regularly deals with some of the most divisive issues in American law-making, including affirmative action on behalf of women, ethnic minorities and sexual groups. It has been a congressional arena for bitter arguments on subjects such as same-sex marriage, terrorism law, civil liberties and product liability.

Issues of this kind have frequently formed the frontline in the political warfare of the 1990s, in which the Republican Party has struggled to put

its conservative social and legal agenda into law, attempting to roll back the Democratic-led liberal measures of the 1960s.

As a result, the judiciary committee is far from being an above-the-tray body of constitutional greybeards and independents. It is a partisan body, and a body with sharply contrasted political views of a president who has twice snatched the White House from out of Republican hands.

The judiciary committee's members include the Georgia Republican Bob Barr, who can be guaranteed to vote for Mr Clinton's impeachment. He put forward an impeachment motion last year, before anyone had ever heard of Ms Lewinsky. "The report lays out a clear case that the president committed obstruction of justice and other offences that strike at the heart of our legal system," Mr Barr said on Sunday.

At the other end of the spectrum is the Massachusetts Democrat Barney Frank, a staunch Clinton defender on most issues, and the brother of the White House communications director, Ann Lewis. Mr Frank is one of the few openly gay members of Congress, and one of the best debaters and smartest talkers in Washington, but even he has grown weary of Mr Clinton's legal defence. "I wish he would have learned that 'I didn't inhale' is just not worthy of him, and everybody sees through it. He's not 14 any more and trying to outsmart the principal."

The polarisation of the committee contrast with the mood and culture of the judiciary committee that investigated calls for Richard Nixon's impeachment during the Watergate crisis in 1974. In that inquiry, Mr Hyde's predecessor as chairman, Peter Rodino, presided over a solid group of around 10 independent-minded centrists whose votes tended to sway the committee on a relatively non-partisan basis. Even though all members of the committee are up for re-election in November's mid-term elections, it is unlikely that the membership or the balance of power will change significantly.

Mr Hyde, aged 74, a Chicagoan and a Roman Catholic, has a long history as a legislative opponent of abortion rights. He defended Ronald Reagan over the Iran-Contra affair and is a supporter of the radical rightwing turn in the Republican Party led by Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker. However, he has a fiercely independent streak and has angered some in his party by vehemently opposing statutory time limits on membership of Congress.



The Clintons leaving the White House yesterday for New York, where the president spoke on the world economy, one of a number of initiatives attempting to show he is still able to run the country

PHOTOGRAPH: RON EDMONDS

Blair refuses to dump friend

TONY Blair yesterday dismissed calls to distance himself from Bill Clinton, insisting he was not a fair-weather friend, writes **Ewen MacAskill**

He will still meet Mr Clinton in New York next week, in spite of any potential embarrassment, to discuss the Third Way and other political issues at a university seminar.

Mr Blair's chief press officer said: "The Prime Minister doesn't dump people because some report appears on the Internet."

He added: "He sees President Clinton as a very good friend and ally to this country, not least for what he has done on several occasions for the Northern Ireland peace process."

Mr Blair spoke to Mr Clinton for half-an-hour on the day the Starr report was published and Downing Street did not rule out a further conversation between the two this week. Downing Street described media reports of their Friday conversation as overblown, denying it concentrated on the president's personal problems and insisting it was dominated by the economy, Russia and Northern Ireland.

"The Prime Minister is not a fair-weather friend, and, whether people like it or not, that's the way he operates," Mr Blair's chief press officer said.

Downing Street listed three reasons why Mr Blair stood by Mr Clinton. As well as friendship, Mr Blair saw it as being in Britain's national interest to have a close relationship with the world's biggest democracy, and it was not for Britain to interfere in what was essentially a "war" for the American congress and the American people."

White House launches two-pronged fight to save Clinton's presidency

continued from page 1
strengthened effort to stave off impeachment proceedings and save the Clinton presidency include the Northern Ireland peace talks chairman, George Mitchell, and a retiring California congressman, Vic Fazio.

After several days in which Mr Clinton has been forced to remain in the White House, fighting off the effects of the report of the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, he and the first lady flew to New York to present his challenge for global economic revival

and attend fund-raising events with local Democrats.

Mr Clinton's speech was one of a number of initiatives in which he will attempt to show Americans that he is able to run the country and command the world stage. Next week he will be joined by Tony Blair and other world leaders in New York to set out plans for reviving the world economy.

Hillary Clinton is expected to play a more prominent role over the next few days in support of her husband, White House sources claimed.

In Washington, White House aides continued to work on possible ideas for a compromise that would enable Mr Clinton to remain in office until his term ends in January 2001. One source said Democratic aides on Capitol Hill were discussing ideas for "censure-plus", in which Mr Clinton would be subjected not just to a motion of censure but to other measures to clip his wings for the remainder of his term.

Two key senior Democrats, the Senate leader Tom Daschle and the House of Rep-

resentatives' leader Dick Gephardt, were expected to issue statements last night which would fall short of White House pleas for outright opposition to impeachment. "They are going to be very cautious, and perhaps even a little critical," a Senate source said.

However Mr Clinton received a significant statement of support from his defence secretary, William Cohen, the only Republican in the administration and a man who 24 years ago voted, as a Republican member of the House judiciary committee,

for the impeachment of President Nixon.

Speaking in Tokyo, Mr Cohen said: "I believe the president is capable of carrying out his responsibilities as commander-in-chief."

The opinion polls which will hold the key to Congress's political calculations continued to show strong support for Mr Clinton yesterday. A Gallup poll taken on Sunday showed his job approval rating rising to 64 per cent, and public opinion consolidating in support of censure, not impeachment.

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Viagra raises spectre of NHS rationing

Sarah Boseley examines the injustices inherent in the medicine supply system



Jaymee Bowen (left), who was refused treatment for the leukaemia which killed her, Frank Dobson, 'thinking the unthinkable', and Viagra, increasing the temperature of the debate

THE significance of Viagra, the pill against impotence, is no longer confined to the role it has been playing for months in smutty jokes and tales of illicit drug dealing at rave dances. Viagra is the straw that could break the camel's back. And the camel, in this instance, is the medicine supply system in the UK.

Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, came into office promising he would "think the unthinkable". What has happened with Viagra is evidence that he means it.

The ban on its prescription in the NHS is a holding measure, designed to buy time. And time is needed for the

Government and its medical advisers to look the fraught issue of rationing in the face. The Department of Health has tried ducking and diving in the face of expensive medicines before.

When beta-interferon, for the treatment of multiple sclerosis and donapril for Alzheimer's, came along, health authorities were given confused messages about limiting the amount of money they spent on these very costly drugs.

It meant some people could have them while just as deserving others could not. What has grown up since long before Labour came to power is a botchpotch of treatment by postcode where

the price is high. Infertility treatment is an obvious example.

Nobody is satisfied with such manifest injustice. The sense of unfairness over rationing became a heated public issue in the case of Child B — Jaymee Bowen — whose father contested in court the health authority's refusal of experimental treatment for her leukaemia.

For the first time a Health Secretary has said that a drug proved to be effective in very large numbers of people with a serious medical complaint cannot — at least for the time being — be prescribed on the NHS because of cost.

There are two possible scenarios. One is that this is part

of negotiations going on behind the scenes for months to get the manufacturers, Pfizer, to drop the proposed price to the NHS.

In the past the Government has done deals with the pharmaceutical industry to their mutual benefit. Under the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme (PPRS), drug companies have made sufficient profits out of the NHS to be able to continue researching new medicines, but have had those profits capped by the agreement so as not to bankrupt the Department of Health.

Clearly Pfizer is not at the moment playing ball. Frank Dobson said yesterday his department is still in discus-

sions with Pfizer, obviously hoping it can be persuaded.

But Pfizer will realise that the Department of Health cannot possibly deny Viagra to genuinely impotent men forever.

There are already treatments for impotence available on the NHS, which are twice the price of the blue diamond-shaped pill.

Injections into the penis cost about £9 an erection, to Viagra's £4 or £5. But because they are painful, embarrassing and out of the pocket of the most desperate men want them.

So there is a second scenario, and that is to establish a new body, or give additional responsibilities to an existing

group or committee, to look at the cost of medicines, their use and their effectiveness in patients. Health service professionals and the public alike accept that rationing is inevitable, given the constant pushing back of medical frontiers.

It may be that the Government feels it is time to sideline the old PPRS in favour of a system that will openly weigh up medical benefits against cost.

"The PPRS is a rather crude thing based on money," said Joe Collier, editor of the Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin. "It may be appropriate in the spirit of evidence-based medicine to have something rather finer."

Blair's £800m plan to reduce social division

Peter Hetherington and Nicholas Watt

A £800 million programme to tackle problems from bad housing and health to education and crime will be unveiled by the Prime Minister today to help the poorest communities.

Tony Blair will say that social division not only shames the nation but wastes lives and costs Britain dearly with the high price of dependency. He will call for a co-ordinated drive to reduce the gap between poor neighbourhoods and the rest of the country with the launch of 17 pathfinder districts.

The Government's Social Exclusion Unit will underline the problem in a report which will say that while most areas have benefited from rising living standards, the poorest neighbourhoods have become "no go areas for some and no exit zones for others."

With about 1,000 districts identified by the Government as problem areas — from inner city housing estates to run-down Victorian terraces — the Prime Minister will

reveal that 18 special teams will be established involving Whitehall departments, outside experts, community organisations and business.

The use of super-carers and neighbourhood wardens — already being tried in several trial areas — could be extended to make estates safer under the New Deal for communities programme, to be unveiled by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Social Exclusion Unit believes that past initiatives have failed through the absence of effective national policies to deal with the "structural causes of decline". There had been a tendency to "parachute solutions" in from outside rather than engaging local communities.

Mr Blair will stress that he wants "bottom-up" solutions with communities taking the initiative.

The unit will stress that long-term commitments are needed for the poorest areas, rather than short-term solutions which have invariably failed to pull communities around. It talks of pathfinder areas serving as a showcase for other communities.

Straw vows to fight Net racism

INTERNATIONAL computer networks must not be used to peddle racist, threatening and abusive material, the Home Secretary, Jack Straw said last night.

The National Criminal Intelligence Service — which has focused on combating child pornography on the Net — had a "key role" in bringing Internet racism to justice.

He told the Board of Deputies of British Jews: "The Internet offers exciting opportunities for global communication, but it is vulnerable to abuse because websites and newsgroups are accessible from across international borders."

Mr Straw said it was crucial for governments to co-operate across borders to remove illegal material and prosecute originators.

NCIS, which has been working with other police forces against child pornography, submitted a report to the Government earlier this year on other illegal uses of the Internet, including racism.

A spokesman said: "We have identified racism as a potential problem and made recommendations for a strategy for law enforcement on the Internet."

When information is passed to us about material published on the Net what we can do is identify what jurisdiction it comes from, identify the service provider, and alert relevant authorities."

Mr Straw said ministers were also continuing to monitor the issue of "Holocaust denial". Although he acknowledged that many people were very offended by those who claimed the Holocaust was not an historical event, he indicated that the Government was reluctant to make it a criminal offence. There was a need to balance guarding against offence with free speech.

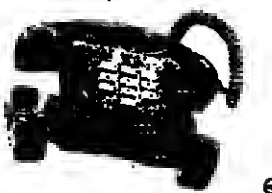
"There is danger that, by introducing legislation, we would play into the hands of those who peddle these lies by giving them a public platform," he said.

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Janáček interpreted as a headline

Review

Andrew Clements
Jenufa
New Theatre, Cardiff

WELSH National Opera's previous staging of Jenufa was a searing, unforgettable experience. Directed by David Pountney, it was part of the Janáček cycle shared between the regional opera companies which did so much to establish the works in the British repertoire. The new version, however, sung in Czech with an entirely English-speaking cast, doesn't match up to those fading memories.

There's no doubt that the emotional force of this most anguished of tragedies comes through in the end, but that is much more to the credit of the perfect theatrical pacing of the opera itself than to the way in which it is presented here, even though the central performances are very finely conceived on their own terms.

Katie Mitchell's production, with sets and costumes by Vicki Mortimer, plays it entirely as a domestic rural drama, as if The Archers had been transposed from Ambridge to Moravia. Even the

first act, originally set outside the Burja mill, with a mill wheel turning fatefully in the background, is brought indoors.

The villagers crowd in among the grain sacks in a way that doesn't so much intensify the introspection of this small, tightly-knit community as diffuse its sharply drawn tensions. The first entry of Kostelníček is almost lost in the miasma and even Laca's knife attack on Jenufa carries less of a shock than it should. As a result the switch to the interior of the Kostelníček's house for the second act's horrors loses much of its claustrophobia.

More sympathetic conducting might have restored at least some of that perspective, but Daniel Harding, making his British operatic debut, treated too much of the score as if it were a symphonic poem with the voices regarded as an optional extra. There was never the needlepoint definition of emotions that makes the orchestral writing so symbolically entwined with the vocal lines. This was Janáček rewritten in all-purpose banner headlines.

The subtlety of many of the performances deserved better. Rosalind Sutherland's Jenufa is a girl whose spirit has been crushed well before the opera begins — one of life's victims

who are easy meat for predators like John Dasek's feckless Steva — and her ability to inject pathos without self-pity into everything she sings is perfectly judged.

Nigel Robson's performance as Laca, too, is scrupulously detailed; he is com-

pactly watchable. Suzanne Murphy creates a more youthful, attractive Kostelníček than most.

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Scott (of the Antarctic) and his team (left) at the South Pole on January 18, 1912, facing a return trek on which they all froze to death just miles short of base camp (right)

Relics of polar epics withdrawn from sale

John Eard

SMALL hut "emotionally charged" relics of Scott's and Shackleton's epic expeditions to the South Pole were yesterday withdrawn from auction in London on Thursday after protests from Antarctic scholars.

Instead, their owner — who has treasured a candle lamp, sledge strap and brass coat hook since he found them in icebound huts 40 years ago — decided to save them for public display by giving them to the Cambridge-based Scott Polar Research Institute.

Last night the auctioneer, Christie's, handed them to John Heap, executive director of the Cambridge-based institute, who said: "The story has ended in a most wonderful way".

The relics, which were expected to fetch at least £13,000, were left in base huts during Sir Ernest Shackleton's expedition between 1907-09 and Captain Robert Scott's expeditions between 1910-04 and 1910-12. Scott and his companions froze to death on their second journey.

The items found in 1957 by John Claydon, a New Zealand wing commander working with the Commonwealth trans-Antarctic expedition. Two years later the Antarctic Treaty protected the huts and outlawed the taking of souvenirs, a habit widespread until then. Mr Claydon, now retired, kept them in his New Zealand garage until Christie's learned of them. "Everybody took away souvenirs", he said.

Christie's catalogue called the lamp, from Shackleton's hut near Mount Erebus, "an evocative souvenir of life dur-

ing the dark Antarctic winters". It was forecast to fetch £3,000-£5,000. Other lots included a glass beaker, crucible and bottles found in the cubicle of Edward Adrian Wilson, a member of Scott's fatal expedition.

But news of the sale led Jeff Rubin, author of the Lonely Planet guide to Antarctica, to call for withdrawal of the items. He said the sale was "a disappointing assault on Antarctica's cultural heritage".

"For Christie's to auction such irreplaceable artefacts of Antarctica's history suggests to me either woeful ignorance of — or merely disregard for — the spirit of the [Antarctic] treaty".

Dr Heap, who is also chairman of the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust, joined the protest. At first Nicholas Lambourn, associate director for the sale, defended the sale by pointing out that even Capt

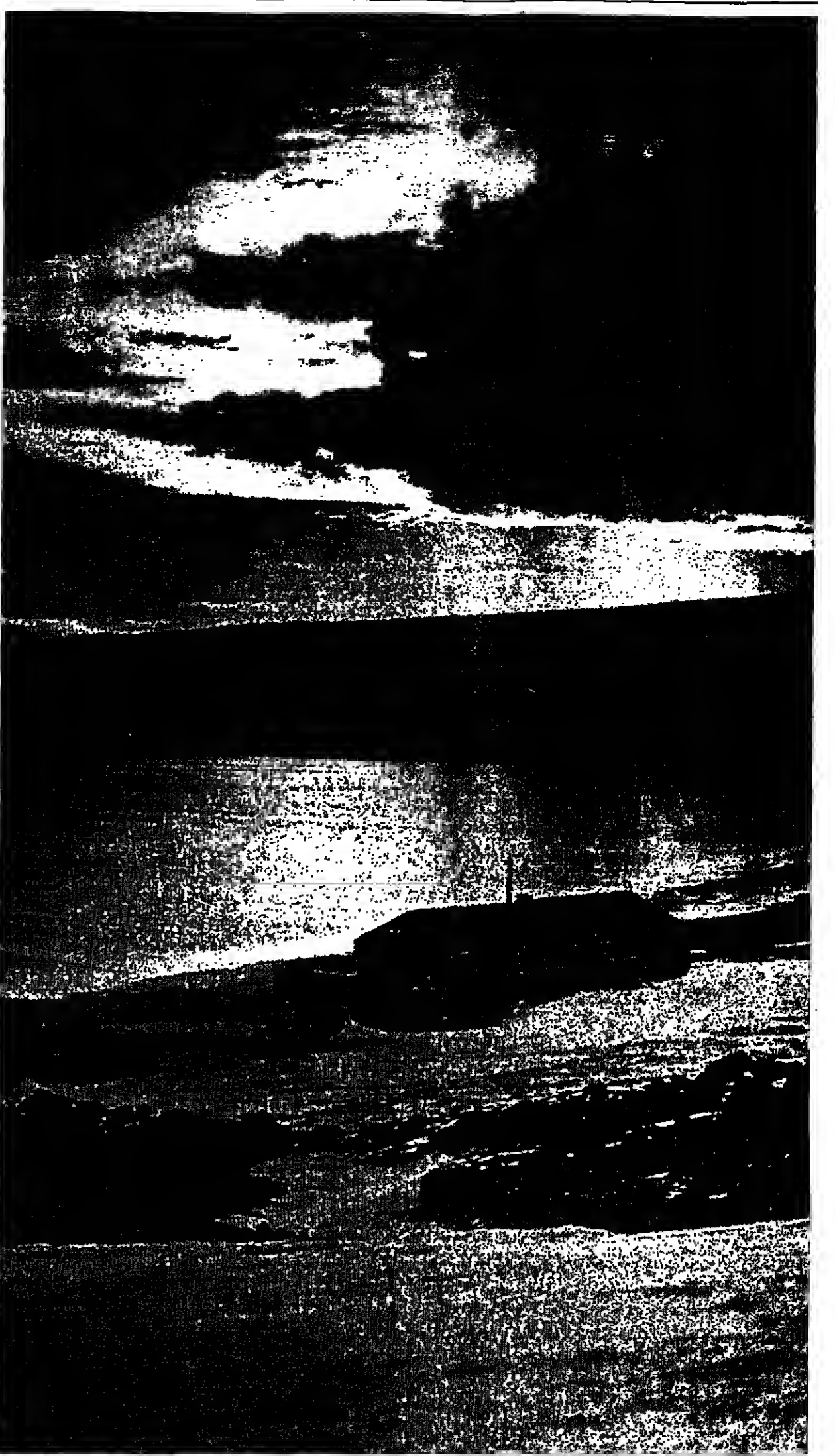
Scott had taken artefacts from previous expedition sites. The saleroom was satisfied Mr Claydon was legally entitled to sell the objects.

Mr Claydon's decision to withdraw came after he spoke by phone with Mr Lambourn early yesterday. Dr Heap said, "John thought he was doing the right thing in offering them for sale but has changed his mind. We will be sending them to the Antarctic New Zealand Heritage Trust, where they will be in the public domain."

The rest of the sale, which will go ahead, includes a photo album showing Shackleton's icebound vessel *Endurance*, expected to sell for up to £15,000, and a canvas military bath owned by Captain Lawrence Oates, celebrated for sacrificing his life on Scott's last expedition. The bath is thought to be worth up to £1,500.



Sledging traces from Scott's Antarctic expedition of 1901-04 (left), and items (right) from the base camp cubicle of Edward Wilson, a member of Scott's ill-fated South Pole trek of 1911-12



Misconduct case doctor 'took out ovaries without consent'

Sarah Hall

ACONSULTANT gynaecologist removed a 48-year-old woman's ovaries without her permission just weeks after telling her she was healthy — and then lied about the operation, a General Medical Council disciplinary hearing was told yesterday.

Rodney Ledward performed the hysterectomy on the private patient so incompetently that she suffered severe loss of blood, with more than two litres being removed from her abdomen and stomach.

He then wrote to her GP claiming the bungled procedure had been "uncomplicated", the disciplinary hearing was told.

The bungled operation is just one of a catalogue of misdemeanours concerning 14 patients, which he allegedly committed at two Kent hospitals, the William Harvey in Ashford, and Bupa's St Saviour's in Hythe, between 1989-1995.

The 58-year-old consultant, who has 33 years of medical experience, is also accused of lying to NHS patients to urge them to opt for private treatment at the Bupa hospital.

Mr Ledward, of Folkestone, Kent, denies serious professional misconduct. The disciplinary hearing, at the GMC's London headquarters, was told his alleged offences range

over four categories: clinical and surgical incompetence; inappropriate delegation to junior doctors; lack of involvement when patients developed complication, and dishonesty in search of personal gain.

The gynaecologist had told the 48-year-old woman that she was still ovulating and her ovaries were healthy just five weeks before he performed the hysterectomy at the private hospital in November 1992, the hearing was told.

He removed the organs without her permission. And,

because of his inadequate stitching, he caused her to lose a massive amount of blood. "Her condition was approaching haemorrhagic shock. She was obviously losing blood and losing a lot of it," James Badnoch QC, for the GMC, told the hearing.

Nine hours after the operation, Mr Ledward was recalled to perform a second operation, during which in excess of two litres of blood was found to have leaked into the patient's stomach and abdomen.

The consultant, who also worked as an obstetrician,

then wrote to her doctor but failed to mention the post-operative complications — a move that was "at the very best a serious gloss on the truth, and at worst totally misleading," said Mr Badnoch. "With regard to the removal of the ovaries, I need say no more than that it was obviously inexcusable to do that."

Mr Ledward also allegedly tried to steer patients towards private treatment by claiming it was not available on the NHS. "He gave patients or their GPs misleading accounts of the circumstances — in essence, he acted dishonestly," Mr Badnoch said.

Mr Ledward is also accused of neglecting his patients after surgery. In one instance he allowed a woman to carry on bleeding for days after a hysterectomy, the hearing was told. Eventually, an ovary had to be removed to end the problem.

He also allegedly failed to take action after complications arose with patients delegated to junior colleagues. In one case, he ignored "the beginnings of a disaster" as an obese patient developed multiple abscesses. Her womb burst as she was rushed to an emergency operation.

Mr Ledward, who has not practised at either hospital since February 1996, has been suspended by the GMC since October 1997.

The hearing continues.



Rodney Ledward: Denies serious professional misconduct

Home-grown female talent leads way for music awards

HOME-grown female talent

led the way in nominations for the third Music Of Black Origin awards announced in London last night.

Teen sensations Cleopatra, soul singers Beverley Knight and Linda Hicks picked up two mentions each, while the established All Saints got two more. Mica Paris and Des'ree were also mentioned.

Newlywed Scary Spice Mel B will co-host the show with Bill Bellamy from MTV USA. There will be live performances from Puff Daddy, Pras of The Fugees, Another Level, Chaka Khan, Beanie Man and D'Angelo. In its third year, the Mobo awards will be shown nationwide for the first time on Channel 4 on October 14.

Awards are made in 23 categories, and teen trio Cleopatra are nominated for both best newcomer and best video. Tunisian-born, British-raised Linda Hicks is nominated for best album and best newcomer, and Beverley Knight is mentioned in the best single and best R&B act sections.

All Saints' Under the Bridge has been nominated for best video and best single, and Goldie, Jamiroquai, The Lighthouse Family and Courtney Pine are also in the running for awards.

International acts Missy Elliott, Puff Daddy, Busta Rhymes and Mariah Carey are among those with a chance of prizes.

United challenge fades as takeover fever grows

Roger Cowe, Jill Treanor and Martin Thorpe

THE ONLY serious competition yet to emerge for BSkyB's attempt to take over Manchester United appeared to be weakening last night, as takeover fever spread to other soccer clubs.

City sources suggested that the unnamed bidder who was being represented by Salomon Smith Barney, the US investment bank, had approached the club last week and has now decided to wait for clarification on the Government's attitude to competition rules.

Peter Mandelson, the Trade and Industry Secretary, will have to rule on the deal by November 2, the Office of Fair Trading said yesterday.

But further delay could occur if he decides to refer the BSkyB bid to the Monopolies Commission, or if he asked the satellite broadcaster for formal undertakings to deal with competition worries.

The City believes that rival bids for Manchester United could then emerge. Bankers believe another media group could table a cash offer similar to BSkyB's in the hope that it would not attract competition concerns and would win over shareholders worried about a Monopolies Commission inquiry.

The takeover fever in the football world spread to Spurs

and Sheffield United yesterday, while Carlton TV's talks with Arsenal were said to be at an advanced stage.

The day of football finance speculation came as Manchester United fans prepared to meet tonight to discuss how to fight Rupert Murdoch's bid. The fans have been helped in their fight by Roger Taylor, member of the rock group Queen who has donated £10,000 to the Independent Manchester United Sup-

ports Association. The money will be used to pay for a rally tonight at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall and to set up a headquarters from which to fight the bid. Around 2,000 fans are expected at tonight's meeting.

The Spurs chairman Alan Sugar is understood to have received a formal bid for the bulk of his stake yesterday from a consortium led by the broadcaster and newspaper columnist Richard Littlejohn.

The group is believed to have offered to buy 29.9 per cent of Tottenham shares — the maximum permitted without launching an offer for all

the shares. The deal would include an option to purchase a further 11 per cent, which would complete the buy out of Sugar's 41 per cent holding in the club.

Mr Littlejohn first made his bid at the beginning of the year. According to sources, he was told by Mr Sugar that he might consider selling in 12 months time if the team continued to struggle.

Mr Sugar said he had turned down an offer for his 41 per cent shareholding in the north London club from the investment company, ENIC, which already owns stakes in several clubs across Europe. But ENIC said he had changed his mind after it had been approached by Mr Sugar, offering his shares for sale.

Spurs' shares rose 13p yesterday, closing at 86p. Sheffield United, currently in the First Division, revealed it was negotiating with unnamed bidders who might take a substantial stake.

As investors tried to identify which club would be the next target, share prices in clubs rose sharply. Newcastle's shares went up by 19 per cent, while fellow premier-ship clubs Leicester and Aston Villa added 18 per cent and 7 per cent respectively.

Shares in Second Division Preston North End ended the day 10p higher at 38p.

Jim White, page 16

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Allies stay distant from Primakov

James Meek in Moscow

YEVGENY Primakov's weekend honeymoon with the politicians who brought him to power ended yesterday as the liberal Yabloko movement and the Communist Party distanced themselves from the increasingly contradictory aims of the new prime minister's government.

Yabloko's leader, Grigory Yavlinsky, without whom Mr Primakov would never have risen so far so fast, turned down a job in the new cabinet, saying sarcastically that it would make him "second first deputy prime minister".

The post, he said, would put him into direct conflict with the "first first deputy prime minister", Yuri Maslyukov, a Communist who believes the solution to Russia's economic crisis are protectionism and rapid, cheap rouble loans to industry.

"The government shouldn't be a debating club, and conflict within the cabinet is impermissible in the present circumstances," Mr Yavlinsky said.

Despite Mr Maslyukov's leading role in Mr Primakov's plans — yesterday he took over the office suite previously occupied by the arch-rival "young reformer" Boris Nemtsov on the fifth floor of the government building — the Communists too are wary of identifying themselves too closely with the new regime.

The three-party alliance which the Communists lead said in a statement that it would not be putting forward candidates for the government and would concentrate its energies on a day of protest on October 7 to demand the resignation of President Boris Yeltsin.

Already, with his government barely half-formed, Mr Primakov said he would have a full list by the end of the week — serious policy disagreements are emerging on such core policy issues as whether to increase the rouble supply, stoking inflation, or stick to the tight-fisted supply-side policies which have kept a trickle of IMF credits coming at the expense of an economy sucked dry of liquidity.



Yavlinsky, above, said joining the cabinet would have put him into conflict with Maslyukov, below



Viktor Gerashchenko, the new head of the Russian central bank and a figure regarded with ill-disguised contempt in Western financial circles, has already said there will need to be a "small, controlled" injection of roubles into the economy to pay off debts and compensate Russians for the collapse of the currency.

He was directly contradicted yesterday by the acting finance minister, Mikhail Zadornov, who is likely to keep his job.

"We would prefer not to resort to central bank credits," he said.

Addressing his first cabinet meeting yesterday, Mr Primakov soothed, stirred and reassured but was short on specifics. He talked of "extraordinary measures" to solve

the problem of wage and pension arrears "once and for all".

But did not say what they might be.

He denied that the new government would be communist, or even centre-left, or would seek to isolate Russia from the rest of the world, saying it would be "a national and a patriotic government, which must be concerned for Russia's interests".

He spoke harshly of the "shock therapy" policies of his predecessors — Yegor Gaidar, Viktor Chernomyrdin and Sergei Kiriyenko.

"If the therapy stretches out for almost a decade and there's no sign of improvement, then of course it's not in the interests of the country or the people," he said.

Mr Primakov appears to be setting the stage for Mr Maslyukov to realise his long-cherished dirigiste dream of mass rouble investment to revive industry, combined with tariff barriers to protect Russia's inefficient producers.

But the programme Mr Maslyukov drafted for the Communists during the 1996 presidential election campaign also included the questionable assumption that the IMF would go on supporting an expansionist, inflationary Russia.

Before he headed the state planning ministry Mr Maslyukov was chief engineer at the Soviet Union's main factory producing Kalashnikov rifles.

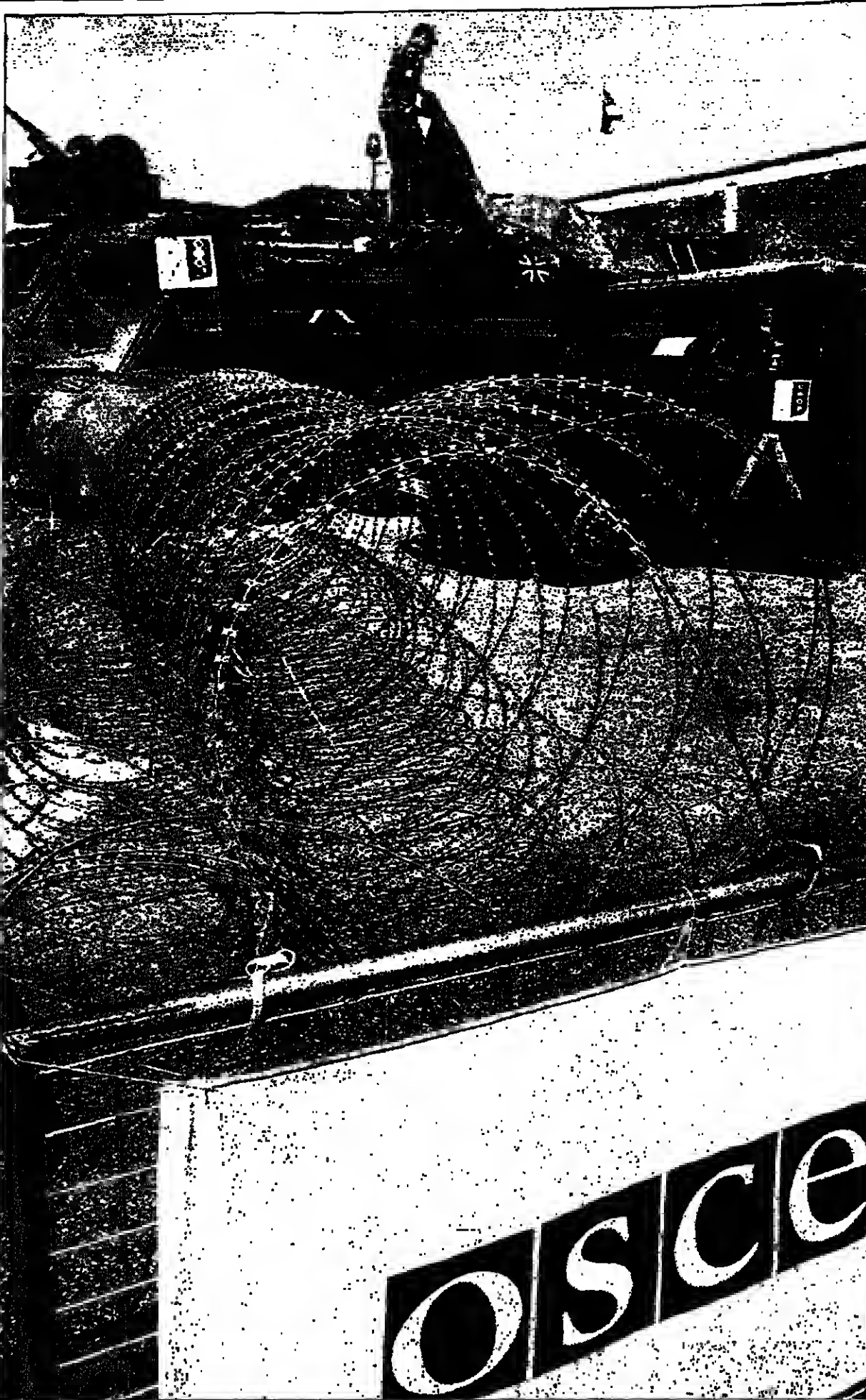
He may overestimate the ability of Russia's still vast military complex, collapsed farms and feeble commercial goods plants to benefit rapidly from cheap credits and protectionism without massive waste, shortages, pilfering and the further decay of stagnant communities.

Despite the reputation of Mr Gaidar and Mr Chernomyrdin as industrial wreckers, they were never able to bankrupt or shut down more than a handful of enterprises.

Despite its shrivelled defence budget, for instance, Russia still has four working shipyards designed to produce nuclear submarines.

The United States has only one.

G7 reaction, page 12



A German soldier secures ballots from the Bosnian polls at a warehouse near Sarajevo

PHOTOGRAPH: DAMIR SAGOLJ

Bosnia polls spark MEPs' fury

Jonathan Steele

EUROPEAN observers strongly criticised the management of Bosnia's general election yesterday as voters waited to see if the weekend poll would reduce the grip of hardline nationalists.

Roughly 200,000 voters could not find their names on the register and had to be given special ballot forms. That was four times more than were left unregistered in last year's local elections. Computer glitches and late deliveries of ballot forms also caused large queues at many polling stations.

A German MEP, Doris Pack, who chaired a team of five observers, said she was "furious" that problems encountered in the previous two Bosnian elections had not been rectified. "This kind of deficiency can easily lead to erosion of voters' confidence," the observers said. They also attacked the poor security provided for parties campaigning in areas controlled by ethnic rivals.

The elections, the third since the Dayton Agreement of 1995 ended four years of war, were run by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The OSCE's mission in Bosnia has been led since Dayton by a US appointee with a broad mandate to declare rule changes and disqualify candidates unilaterally. Before any of the independent monitors had time to give their verdict, Robert Barry, the current head of the OSCE, hailed the elections as "the most successful" since 1995.

Voting was for the three-member presidency — one each from the Serb, Croat and Muslim ethnic groups, the national parliament and separate ethnic assemblies.

Although the first official results are not due until today, the hardline Radical Party in the Bosnian Serb republic claimed yesterday to have defeated the Western-supported president, Biljana Plavcic.

The main nationalist party among the Croats said it was winning more than 85 per cent of the vote, enough to capture the Croat seat on the presidency from a moderate.

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News in brief

Fighting in Tirana as Albanian opposition attempts coup

PROTESTERS stormed public buildings and commandeered tanks in Tirana yesterday in Albania's worst violence for more than a year. The prime minister, Fatos Nano, who is in hiding, said a coup was under way.

Several people were wounded in exchanges of gunfire between guards at Mr Nano's office and mourners attending the funeral of a Democratic politician whose

murder at the weekend marked violence and opposition demands for the prime minister to quit.

Armed gangs roamed the centre of Tirana in cars and opposition supporters seized the state television and radio station.

Sali Berisha, leader of the opposition Democratic Party, blaming Mr Nano for the murder on Saturday of Azem Hajdari and his body-

guard, demanded the resignation of Mr Nano's five-party coalition.

In 1997 an Italian-led multinational force helped to restore calm to Albania after months of anarchy caused by the collapse of fraudulent investment schemes. Mr Nano replaced Mr Berisha in elections in July last year.

Mr Berisha said on state-owned television: "I call on all Albanians in these ex-

tremely difficult moments to restrain themselves and trust in a political solution of the crisis."

Opposition parties have asked President Rexhep Meidani to head an interim government while a new administration was formed.

The Nato secretary-general, Javier Solana, expressed the alliance's concern at the renewed violence in Europe's poorest country. — Reuters.

10 charged with spying for Cuba

TEN people have been arrested in Miami on charges of spying for the Cuban government, a spokesman for the US attorney's office in Miami, John Schlesinger, announced yesterday. Details were to be given later.

Leaders of Cuban exile organisations in Miami said the case was related to the 1996 shooting down by Cuban MIGs of two aircraft flown by the exile group Brothers to the Rescue.

Four people were killed in the incident, which led to international protests. — Reuters.

Algerian attack leaves 27 dead

Algerian security sources said yesterday that Muslim rebels slit the throats of 27 people overnight in the worst massacre in the country in months. The sources said the attack, in Ain Delfa province, an Islamist stronghold 80 miles south-west of the capital Algiers, had also left two people seriously injured. — Reuters.

TV ban by Murdoch

Rupert Murdoch has vetoed plans by his Fox Television network to dramatise a book about Clarence Thomas, the member of the United States supreme court who was accused by Anita Hill of sexual harassment, writes Mark

Tran in Washington. Mr Murdoch said the judge, a friend, had been unfairly treated.

Bodies returned

The International Committee of the Red Cross said yesterday that it had evacuated by air from Afghanistan the bodies of seven of the nine Iranian diplomats killed by Taliban fighters. — Reuters.

Official freed

A South African foreign affairs official, Robert McBride, was released from prison in Mozambique yesterday after being held for six months on gun-running and espionage charges. — AP.

Picasso destroyed

A Picasso painting worth an estimated £920,000 was on

Swissair Flight 111 when it crashed off the Canadian coast two weeks ago, Swissair said yesterday. The work, entitled The Painter, was destroyed. — AP.

Plane hijacked

Two armed hijackers yesterday took control of a Turkish Airlines flight from Ankara to Istanbul with 76 people on board and redirected it to the Black Sea city of Trabzon. The Anatolian news agency said. — Reuters.

Babies deposit

The south China city of Guangzhou is demanding a £320 deposit from couples wanting to marry, to be returned after 14 years if they comply with the country's one-child-per-couple policy. — AP.

Public Notice

THE INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF CARE OF CHILDREN RECEIVING COMPLEX HEART SURGERY AT THE BRISTOL ROYAL INFIRMARY

The Secretary of State for Health, Frank Dobson, has appointed Professor Ian Kennedy, Professor of Health Law, Ethics and Policy at the University College, London, to conduct an inquiry under Section 84 of the National Health Service Act 1977.

Professor Kennedy's terms of reference are: "To inquire into the management of the care of children receiving complex cardiac surgical services at the Bristol Royal Infirmary between 1984 and 1995 and relevant related issues; to make findings as to the adequacy of the services provided; to establish what action was taken both within and outside the hospital to deal with concerns raised about the surgery and to identify any failure to take appropriate action promptly; to reach conclusions from these events and to make recommendations which could help to secure high quality care across the NHS."

Professor Kennedy will hold a preliminary hearing at 10.30am on Tuesday, October 27, 1998 in the Conference Hall at Bristol City Council, The Council House, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR.

The purposes of this preliminary hearing will be:

- to explain the purpose of the inquiry;
- to explain its procedure; and
- to consider applications to be legally represented at the inquiry at public cost.

Anyone who has an interest in any matter within the terms of reference of the inquiry is invited to attend the preliminary meeting at 10.30am on Tuesday, October 27, at Bristol City Council's Conference Hall. The hearing will be restricted to the purposes set out above.

Full public hearings, to be held in both Bristol and London, will start as early as possible in 1999.

General questions about the inquiry can be addressed to the Secretary, Una O'Brien, Bristol Royal Infirmary Inquiry, Room 1G07, Wellington House, 135-135 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UG; fax: 0171 972 4602; e-mail: inquiry@doh.gov.uk

Anyone proposing to make a submission about legal costs is requested to notify the Secretary in writing in advance.

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The Guardian Tuesday September 15 1998

WORLD NEWS 7

Africa heads towards new genocide

Congo's civil war is dragging the continent into a bloodbath, writes Victoria Brittain

SOUTHERN African presidents meeting in Mauritius yesterday were faced with a dramatic military escalation of the conflict in Congo, where Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia are backing what appears to be a new genocide.

Mass killings of Tutsis, expressly ordered by the Congolese president, Laurent Kabila, have occurred in western and eastern Congo. Meanwhile evidence has emerged that Congo is mobilising and arming forces in preparation for carrying the war into Rwanda and Uganda. At dawn yesterday there was the heaviest fighting yet in the east of Congo as Mr Kabila's irregular forces — many of them Rwandans who took part in the genocide of

Eduardo Dos Santos of Angola — called again at the Mauritius summit for the two states to withdraw all their troops from Congo. Yesterday the head of Uganda's external security organisation, David Fukiol, told the weekly East African that Ugandan rebels and Rwandan Hutus were being trained in Eastern Equatoria region of Sudan under officers of the former Rwandan Hutu army, including Colonel Tharcisse Renzaho.

Col Renzaho, a former senior police officer in Rwanda capital Kigali, is accused of directing the slaughter of thousands of Tutsis in Kigali in 1994.

In Mauritius Mr Kabila and his southern African allies continued to refuse to meet the leaders of the rebellion to discuss a ceasefire.

Only South Africa, which is extremely sensitive to the 1994 genocide and the fear of a full-scale repeat, is working for a solution to the real problem in Mr Kabila's Congo — the internal one.

Its foreign affairs minister, Alfred Nzo, said yesterday that the rebels must be 'involved in talks'.

"There can be no other way. I don't think it is going to help to insist there is no rebel movement."

A web of deliberate confusion and propaganda has been spread over the rebellion, and has made thicker with each of the three regional meetings held in the last 10 days: in Victoria Falls, Addis Ababa and Mauritius.

At stake — besides the lives of innumerable Congolese and minority Tutsis in Rwanda and Uganda — is the personal prestige of three heads of state: Mr Mugabe, Sam Njoma of Namibia and Mr Dos Santos, who have publicly thrown their countries into a war against the better judgement of many of their own military leaders.

We can't afford to stay in this war, we will be seen as supporting genocide, a senior Zimbabwean official told rebel leaders privately.

The uneasiness in the region has increased since the Victoria Falls summit last week, when Mr Kabila stunned the heads of state present



A rebel soldier in Goma, which was attacked by exiles and local militias fighting for President Kabila

PHOTOGRAPH BY ABDELHAK SENNA

by telling them he was preparing to train soldiers and interahamwe militias from the Rwandan regime responsible for the 1994 genocide to fight again in Rwanda.

He added that he was in contact with terrorists in Sudan whom he was preparing to use against Uganda. Both President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and President Pasteur Bizimungu of Rwanda heard Mr Kabila's threats.

None of his three allies reacted, although a bewil-

dered Mr Dos Santos — whose forces are fighting with tanks, artillery and aircraft for Mr Kabila — said he thought the discussion was about a ceasefire.

The issue has been shifted from the rebellion which broke out among Mr Kabila's troops on August 2 and the new genocide against the Tutsi minority in Congo to an "invasion by Uganda and Rwanda", which never took place.

As for Angola, the excuse

for its massive intervention in Congo on the side of Mr Kabila was a purported alliance between the rebels and the Angolan Unita movement. The accusation, repeatedly denied by the rebel leaders but repeated by Mr Dos Santos yesterday, is believed by Angolan military officials to be untrue.

Before the August rebellion Uganda and Rwanda both had some troops on the eastern Congo border, by agreement with Mr Kabila and theoreti-

cally in joint operations with his forces against the tens of thousands of former Rwandan soldier and interahamwe who have vowed to continue the genocide in Rwanda.

But in May Mr Kabila betrayed his allies and began a secret training programme for 15,000 interahamwe fighters and former Rwandan army officers.

In the seismic shifting of alliances around Mr Kabila in the early summer, he put this

training programme of Rwandan exiles under the command of two of the Katangese generals who helped him overthrow President Sese Seko Mobutu and these same Rwandans, who were then fighting for the late dictator.

The three presidents, who have put their prestige alongside Mr Kabila's in the new phase of Congo's struggle for democracy, now find themselves in company where commercial interests are the only factor.

The 71 countries are mainly former European colonies and for decades their trade has been governed by the EU's Lomé agreement, which comes up for renegotiation later this month.

The EU has proposed a historic shift away from managed trade and aid towards a new free trade system, together with complementary development aid agreements.

Tough EU talks on trade reopen with S Africa

Martin Walker in Brussels

THE European Union's leading negotiator for a free-trade agreement with South Africa, which is intended as a model for Europe's future relations with the developing world, said yesterday he was using "hardball tactics" to win access to South African waters for Spanish and Portuguese fishermen.

The 21st round of negotiations on the trade deal opens in Brussels tomorrow: an attempt to secure an agreement missed at the last ditch in June when President Nelson Mandela left the EU summit in Cardiff empty-handed.

"I hope we are playing hard ball — that means a better agreement for Europe," said Philip Lowe, director-general of the EU's development arm and one of the highest-ranking British officials in Brussels.

The main problems for the EU are Spain and Portugal's dual demands: that their fishermen should have special access to South Africa's rich fisheries and South Africa should stop marketing its own versions of port and sherry.

Europe wants South Africa to drop its remaining protective tariffs against EU industrial exports progressively in return for the opening of EU markets to South African agricultural goods, including wine.

The agreement will also require South Africa to introduce a competition law compatible with EU rules.

Three days and at least one night of bargaining lie ahead as the negotiators hammer out what the EU hopes will become the model for an eventual EU-led free trade area extending to the association of developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific known as the ACP group.

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Bad and getting worse in Brazil as dollars flow out

Alex Bollos in Rio de Janeiro

BRAZILIANS are facing a return to the years of economic chaos as President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government tries with little success to halt a flood of dollars leaving the country.

As its share prices hit record lows and pressure increases to devalue its currency, the real, the world's third most populous democracy is looking ever more like the next victim of international financial turbulence. And what happens in Brazil will strongly knock on to the rest of South America, especially Mexico and Argentina.

Some experts even believe that a Brazilian currency devaluation could spread chaos back to the Far East, putting new pressure on the Hong Kong dollar and possibly opening the door to a Chinese devaluation that would shake Asia.

The Brazilian economy is more than twice as big as Russia's, and until early September, it had six times more in foreign currency reserves — \$70 billion (\$42 billion). But talk of a devalua-

tion has been growing because the government seems powerless to halt the flight of capital. More than \$1 billion has been haemorrhaging away each day since the beginning of September. At the moment, there is \$32 billion left.

Last Thursday the Sao Paulo stock exchange dropped more than 15 per cent, to its lowest level since 1990. Yesterday saw a slight rise,

but the trend is down. Raising interest rates, to 49.5 per cent, stabilised shares but failed to steady investors' nerves: more than \$1 billion left the country on Friday.

It was only four years ago that Brazil escaped from hyperinflation when the Real Plan created a new currency pegged to the dollar. In one fell swoop it eliminated inflation, then running at more than 3,000 per cent a year.

President Cardoso, who is going for re-election in less

than three weeks, built his political reputation on the Real Plan, which meant that most Brazilians could at last hold on to their money. He knows that a devaluation of the real — which is seen as overvalued by 20 to 30 per cent — will probably be followed by high inflation. He is pulling out all the stops to defend his currency.

It may be beyond his control. Brazil's main problem

for international investors is an unsustainable budget deficit of about 7 per cent of GDP. For all Mr Cardoso's success in stabilising the currency and bringing money into the country through ambitious privatisations.

Even without a big devaluation, the measures taken to protect the currency are likely to ensure Brazil faces a recession next year. In the industrial hub of Sao Paulo, the jobless rate is already the highest for more than a de-

cade, 20 per cent. The key to cutting the budget deficit is reform of Brazil's generous pension system and of public spending. But President Cardoso has never persuaded congressmen to enact reforms that would reduce their powers of patronage.

Budget reform "really needs to happen now", said Joe Petry, chief economist for Latin America at Citicorp Securities in New York. "The international market has really grown impatient."

The crisis is complete turnaround for Brazil, which under Mr Cardoso was a darling of developing markets. Now many analysts are comparing it to Mexico, where billions of dollars were wiped off shares in 1994 and the government was forced to dig deep into its reserves. The peso was devalued, and the deepest recession in half a century ensued for Mexicans.

But others say there are crucial differences: Brazil's woes are largely due to turmoil spreading from Asia and Russia, while Mexico's crisis was mostly of its own making. Brazil also has more than twice the reserves Mexico had to defend against currency speculators.



Beijing shows envoy new face

John Gittings in Hong Kong

THE United Nations Human Rights Commissioner, Mary Robinson, claimed success for her visit to China yesterday as dissidents in the provinces boldly applied for permission to form political parties.

The provincial authorities have responded more mildly than in the past, though human rights observers suspect that little has changed behind Beijing's new face. Ms Robinson said she had agreed with President Jiang Zemin to continue a dialogue on human rights. She believed this made a visit worth while. Beijing has apparently also

signalled that it will sign the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights before the end of November, ending its refusal to name a date — and fulfilling one of Ms Robinson's objectives.

There have been signs of a slight easing up of the regime of control since the spring. Subordinates of Mr Jiang have encouraged debate on social and political reform, with more books being published and some academic discussion.

Political activists in three north-eastern provinces were reported by a Hong Kong group yesterday to have applied directly to Beijing to register the China Democracy Party. This follows applications in Shandong and Hubei

last week: these were not rejected outright by the authorities, who merely asked for more details. When campaigners in Zhejiang province tried the same thing while President Clinton was visiting China in June they were swiftly arrested.

Chinese officials say that they are about to simplify the regulations currently in force for registering "social groups". These require such groups to accept the leadership of the Communist Party, give detailed information on membership and funding, and refrain from harming the interests of the state.

In answer to Ms Robinson's concern about human rights, President Jiang — whom Tony Blair is expected to

meet in China next month — said his "primary concern" was to provide food and shelter for 1.2 billion Chinese population.

Ms Robinson's tour included Tibet. While there she avoided visiting prisons and detention centres: human rights groups say that such visits in the past have led to prisoners being beaten up or even killed after trying to protest about their conditions.

She also asked about the young boy chosen three years ago by the Dalai Lama to succeed as Tibet's second-ranking spiritual leader, the Panchen Lama. Officials declined to reveal the boy's whereabouts, saying only that he was under guard for his own protection.

No room at the Holy Land casino

David Sharrock in Jericho finds the Palestinian population banned from Palestine's own new gambling den

IN THE end it opened not with a bang — of the sort that brought this ancient city's walls tumbling down — but a ban: on the people who are supposed to benefit from the Oasis Casino, billed the first attraction in what will grow to be the Middle East's biggest tourist resort.

The supermodel Claudia Schiffer couldn't make it, so the launch party was cancelled. Officially she had other commitments, but her absence could have been to do with the killing of two top Islamic militants last week and Israel's closure of the West Bank.

The casino opened yesterday, promising to be a cornucopia of good for the Palestinians but refusing them entry. The Oasis management hopes to welcome thousands of Israelis into Palestinian Authority territory, but the authority will not let a single Palestinian through its doors.

Gamely defying these tawdry standards at a hostile press conference yesterday was Norbert Steger, a former Austrian deputy prime minister and boss of Cap Tourism, the holding company behind Yasser Arafat's first big foray into inter-

national joint-venture capitalism. No Palestinian business or political figure was present. And no Palestinian croupier (there are supposed to be nearly 300) was there either.

"They come out at night," commented a Russian female croupier.

Odder still, the public relations company was from Tel Aviv, the press releases were in Hebrew and English, and the catering was Jewish.

"The Palestinian private shareholders are represented by me," Dr Steger said. "The decision not to allow in Palestinians was made by the Palestinian Authority."

Eventually a Palestinian worker was found. Nabil — not his real name — had given up his job as a teacher to tend slot machines. A 28-year-old refugee, he had only

one reason for switching careers. "I'm here to work, not for pleasure. I used to earn \$400 [about £240] a month as a teacher, now I'm getting \$850."

Dr Steger said the investment amounted to \$150 million and it would create hundreds of jobs.

"Arafat was enthusiastic about some international capital coming here. He's really been trying to convince people all over the world to invest in Palestine."

But why are most of the Oasis's international staff living in Maale Adumim, a Jewish settlement in the Israeli-occupied West Bank? And why are its Palestinian backers so shy about their identity? Or what does it say about the sort of state Mr Arafat hopes to establish?

Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

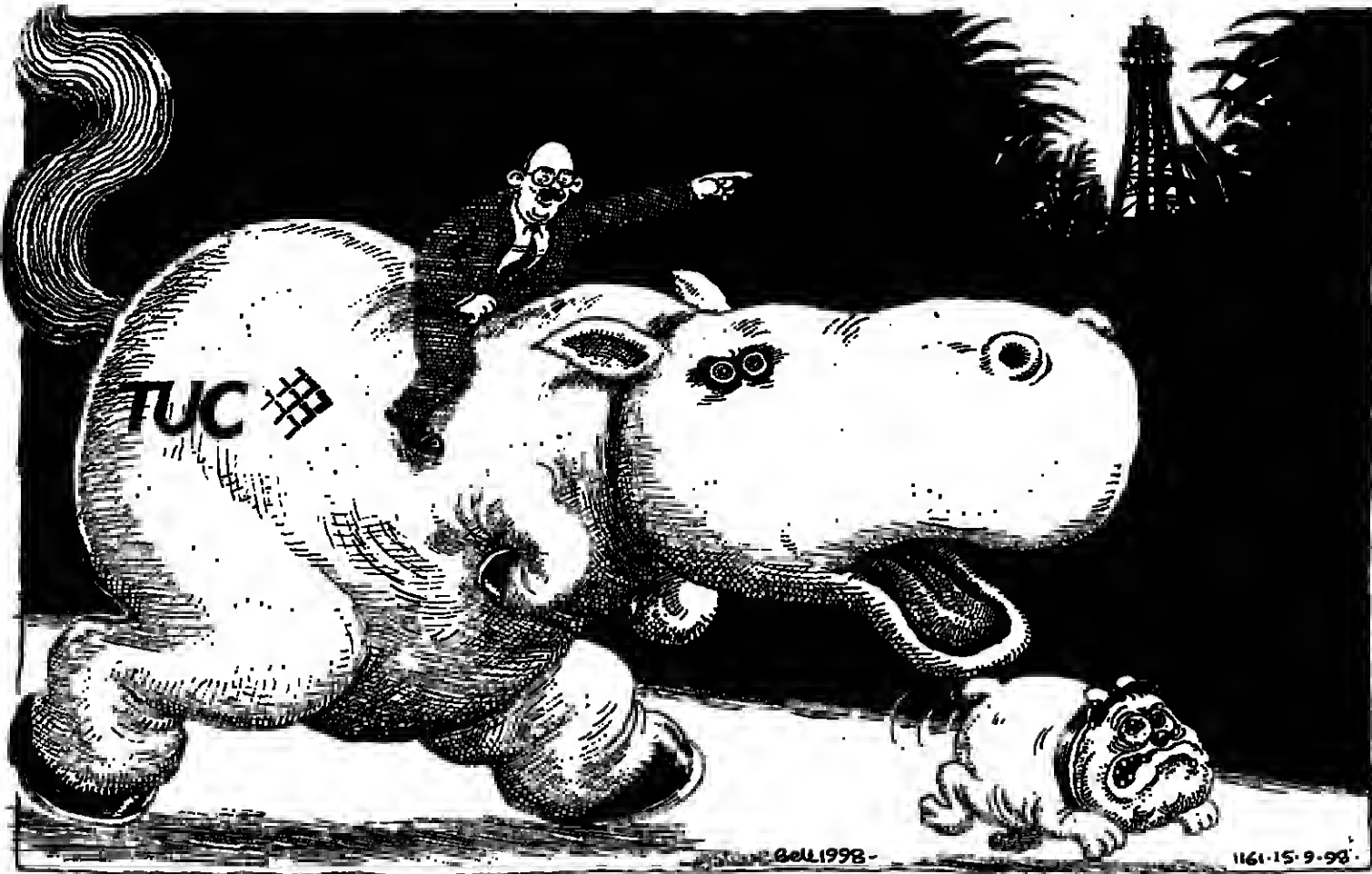
THE firefighters' strike in Essex over cuts in services and training (not to mention chemical suits), the subject of a T-shirt protest by West Ham's Ian Wright, takes a dramatic twist. The comedian Mark Thomas, who had merriment with the law insisting those who elect not to pay inheritance tax on objects d'art allow the public to view them, has unearthed another obscure piece of legislation. Under the Powers and Constitutions of Local Councils, 10 people present at a parish meeting can demand a poll on any issue, which the district council must then hold on similar lines to an election. This the firemen have done, calling for a referendum on whether the people of Essex want the cuts. Although the result would not be legally binding, it would be a vast endorsement for the council — so much so, indeed, that the Chief Fire Officer has suddenly made an offer which the union executive will recommend its members accept. A victory, then, for democracy in Essex. We look forward to bearing more of this enchanting regulation. "We intend," says Mark Thomas, "to make full use of this legislation."

I AM intrigued by a favour of Mandy Manderson's youth supplied by his mother Mary, who is interviewed in Punch magazine. "I always knew Mandy would become successful," says Mary. "He was in control all the time... He didn't join a club at school but would organise his friends... his what?" "...his friends, although it would be nothing so trivial as say, organising a trip to the pictures at the weekend." "What it was," the Duchess, "as Mandy calls her — a habit he shares with Sir James Savile, OBE — doesn't say, but she does offer a fascinating verdict on young Mandy. "It was a very determined child. Quite in control, never messed it up. Things don't always go to plan, but I don't think many things went wrong with his masterplan." "Cooch, has someone opened the door, or have I caught a chill?"

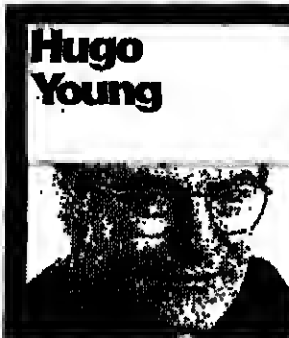
IN the Channel 4 documentary Independent Rosie, an account of Rosie Boycott's brief tenure at the Independent, the eye was caught by a scene at a press awards do. Rosie was chatting with her chum Mr Tony Blair about the paper's dire situation. "Will you survive?" asked Mr Tony. Rosie said she thought so, "as things are going to happen in the next few weeks..." (a reference to Tony O'Reilly's takeover), "but I gather you know that." How comforting to know that the Prime Minister is kept closely informed about commercial takeovers at his more loyal newspapers. Meanwhile, another curio concerned Rosie's brief but fulsome resume of her career. For some reason she forgot to mention her 1985 novel All For Love — to which we will be returning tomorrow.

DARY vicar the Reverend Steve Chalks, the man who "happily" defines the zeitgeist, is safely back on British soil after his trip to India, and celebrates by sending a lengthy press release. This comes Making Sunday Best, "a practical resource kit to help churches check their pulse and improve their performance and service to the community." But this sounds absolutely splendid. If only Bach had had the Reverend Steve as his pastoral guide, he could have written a choral work about it. I will be studying the full text overnight in the hope of making sense of at least some of it.

TWO more contenders stake their claim to this month's PC Brains. Constables Evie Ramsey and Matty Turner, of the Humberside force, distinguished themselves after spotting two men walking on a road in Grimsby carrying large and dangerous weapons. Fortunately, the situation resolved itself without incident. Police magazine reports, when the weapons proved to be daggers. A bearded Australian man carrying a paint brush and two little boys is helping police with their enquiries.



Yes, Clinton is sincere alright. He sincerely wants to get away with it



Hugo Young

WHAT the people joined together, let no judge put asunder. President Clinton's survival is staked on that axiom. It's a mantra for the *fin de siècle*, justifying all things as long as the public apparently supports them. Public opinion is the deity modern governments exalt week by week, even hour by hour. Since Clinton was twice elected to the presidency by popular acclaim, only the American public in polls assembled shall determine what must now be done. The White House yesterday stepped up this strategy for saving Clinton from perdition. Is it the acme of techno-democracy, or the ultimate alibi for cowardly politicians?

The first task finds Middle America's attitude to Judge Starr's report astonishingly unmoved. According to the NBC/Wall Street Journal poll, Clinton's approval ratings are higher now (67 per cent) than a month ago. The polls that show a decline — for example, ABC/Washington Post, from 66 to 59 per cent — say nothing vertiginous. Seven people in 10 think he will serve his term, six in 10 say he has apologized enough. The public's calm satisfactions do not echo the raging of the political class.

Out of such opinions comes Clinton's strand of hope. And when what's up for overturning is a presidential election, they seem to have signal validity. On the eve of Congressional elections, most candidates are more anxious to hear what the people think than to fearlessly pronounce what they think themselves. Such deference to the people, a democrat might say, is only benign. Yet these polls

are deceiving. More respondents believe Starr than believe Clinton, and most think the president has been incapacitated. Though they say he shouldn't resign or be impeached, they also say that the Lewinsky affair will now have a "major impact" on his ability to lead. Are they voting to maintain in office a crippled leader? What conclusions should we draw about the American public's serious engagement with a vital decision?

One could equally suppose that they do not want to know. They wish the whole thing would go away, fast — hence the preference for censure not impeachment. What their attitude reveals is more cynicism than tolerance: the same indifference, far from Washington, that's proclaimed by the pitiful turnout at presidential elections; and a new belief that, in the absence of the Soviet enemy or the fear of world war, heroic leaders are no longer necessary to people who, from Denver to Detroit, luxuriate in getting on with their own lives. In Kennedy's time, they preferred not to know; in Clinton's, they prefer not to act.

Public opinion, in short, is muddled and contradictory, a defective guide to action. It's always fickle and manipulable, as witness British attitudes to Europe, which have oscillated wildly over the years, in accordance with the wider context of the period, the questions asked, and the leaders who asked them. We see this now, in the megaphone polling by Euroscops against the single currency, which is intended to silence the political class on the other side.

An alternative model of politics would start from the premise that public opinion, while needing to be heard, is impossible definitively to decipher, and is therefore of limited value. On many issues, the public is plain ignorant. How many people who say overseas aid should be cut could get anywhere near naming an accurate figure for what is spent on it? They can at best be half-informed and quarter-thoughtful in their responses to what passes for the hyper-democracy of instant polling.

IN SUCH a climate, the job of the political class is to act not as amplifier for the four-public but defender of the nation against the half-formed grunts the pollsters have extracted from it. Middle America may wish the consequences of Lewinsky would disappear by the swiftest route, but Washington cannot afford to take an attitude of such trivial self-indulgence. The Congressional and other political classes are obliged to offer solemn responses to a problem of appalling gravity that cannot be wished away by gestures of coy tolerance, or sophisticated expressions of boredom; still less by the claim that because Clinton is a progressive and Starr a conservative the president must be saved at any cost.

There is no good answer to this crisis of the presidency. Every expedient will be a kind of defeat. Resignation might be the cleanest thing, but would itself undermine a semi-sacred office, not to mention the White House investigation for campaign-finance racketeering. An im-

peachment process would take forever, paralysing every part of US government at home and abroad that did not bear on the president's defence, enforcing into every home a scrutiny of Clinton's morals and character: a futile and ludicrous distraction likely to get nowhere, slowly. Solemn censure, on the other hand, might seem as empty a formality as the further and better presidential confession already being demanded as the prelude to some kind of possible deal with Congress. Clinton's words already seem insuitably contrived, their pseudo-sincerity emanating from his sincere desire to get away with it. What price their repetition in still more heartfelt sound bites?

Even though there's no good answer, however, there are good and bad ways of trying to find one. What the public cannot face, senators and congressmen have a duty not to duck. This involves a recovery of nerve to reach their own judgment. It's surely what they're elected and paid to do. Some of them began to do it before Starr reported. Senator Lieberman and Senator Moynihan and Senator Kerry, Democrats all, declared for protection of professional standards against the terrible damage Clinton has done to public life. They didn't wait for public opinion, in all its casual impatience and fickle disinterest, to provide an excuse for inactivity and double-talk. The voters need their remaining leaders to explain what they should demand of a president. If clever-dick lying and maximum perjury don't destroy their approval, what is their opinion worth?

The estate they're in

Polly Toynbee



TODAY Tony Blair will go to Hackney, in the heart of a God-forsaken urban desert, to unfold his plans for dealing with the nation's 2,000 worst estates. This will be his key place in the jigsaw that joins together the most ambitious reforming social programme the country has seen in decades — Blair's version of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society.

He will talk of the blighted lives of many who live in such places, a world away from the wealth of the rest of us. In his first speech after the election — from a housing estate in Peckham — he promised that there would be no more forgotten people, no one left out. Today he will reveal his Social Exclusion Unit's strategy for redeeming that difficult pledge.

More than any other time in recent history, poverty, chronic unemployment and deprivation are now concentrated in tight geographical areas. These dumping grounds are not just in blighted inner cities, but everywhere on the margins of life in prosperous places such as Bristol, Southampton, Brighton or Luton. The flight of the respectable working class to middle class home ownership has left behind these ghettos of the workless and the hopeless. All our social problems have been decanted into places where the inhabitants will suffer the effects of one another's deprivation, and we will not.

If by magic these 2,000 estates vanished, so would most of the nation's social problems, from crime and permanent welfare dependency to failed schools and bad health. Blair will pledge no more new building of such estates. As it is, the very names of these places are so feared and reviled in local mythology that they drag down the chances of all who live there. For decades since the post-war slum clearances, the problem has always been treated as physical. Give people good housing, make the place look good, and somehow everything else will put itself right. Time and again vast sums were squandered on buildings. Many of these estates now are not slums. They are physically reasonable shapes, but their inhabitants are not. Regeneration used to mean bricks and mortar, but from now on it will mean regenerating the people inside. Bricks and mortar were easy for planners — but people are harder to change.

People aren't the only problem. Bad government has made matters worse. The Social Exclusion Unit counted up the millions of pounds that go into an estate and were horrified at the sums spent on failure. They looked at how a multitude of state agencies converge and collide, making no connection with one another, each trying to deal with one aspect of a family in trouble, but no problem soluble on its own. Imagine the resources a difficult family might use: a drug addict father in the hands of the benefits office and a New Deal Adviser at the Job Centre and maybe a probation officer. They have a baby not thriving, in the hands of a health visitor. Their child in school arrives hungry every morning and causes trouble, but the teacher never sees the parents and can't begin to help.

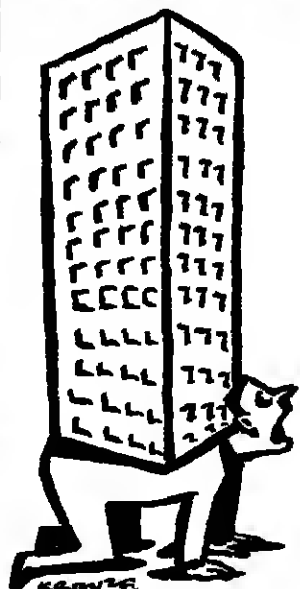
A SOCIAL worker will only drop in occasionally to check they're all still alive if the children are on the at-risk register. Their teenager is regularly in trouble with the police, who keep arresting him at vast and useless expense. The housing department is eager to evict them for their bad behaviour. Their GP can only prescribe pills for the mother, nothing that she really needs.

Between them this family consumes a great deal of professional time and government money. Mountains

files on them have built up in all these offices, but their brushes with officialdom are hated and resented. It's unlikely that they consider any of it as "help", since it all comes with admonitions, threats and conditions. None of it has changed their life or their prospects. For all that money, they are still unemployed, uneducated, unhealthy, alienated and beyond hope.

That's a caricature, but it describes the futility of jealous departmentalism that starts in Whitehall and continues down to all these professional agencies doing their own thing. The policeman, the teacher, the probation officer, the doctor, the social worker, the employment service, the housing officer, all do their best but all answer up the line to different authorities with their own traditions and rules, fiercely guarding their budgets and their own priorities. Can Blair do better? This is where the authority of the Social Exclusion Unit kicks in. Only by fiat from Number 10 is there a chance of making them come together for the first time on the ground: joined-up policy. And only a great deal of extra money can make it happen.

TODAY the Prime Minister will announce that a hefty £200 million is to be spent on this over the next three years, with 17 estates chosen as pathfinders now and 100 more added over the next two years. In each estate the first question will be "Who's in charge here?" One agency will be chosen to lead a consortium bringing together all the others. Usually it will be an arm of the local authority, but on each estate they will seek out the most lively and energetic social entrepreneur available. It could be the local head teacher or the house-



Bricks and mortar were easy for planners — people are harder to change

ing office. Sometimes it could be a voluntary agency running a community centre, though they would need the support of the local council from whom most services flow. All this will be directed from Whitehall by John Prescott's department, drawing on the authority of Number 10 to push it through, weaving in the new education, employment and health action zones. Eighteen teams of Whitehall civil servants, each with 12 members, will be sent out to solve those problems that belong to no one, falling between departments. How do you bring shops back into an estate? How do you give access to credit unions or reputable banks to save them from debt to loan sharks? What do you do when there's no transport? Above all, how do you create jobs where there are none? Who is responsible for disaffected youth roaming around with nothing to do on estates? Can you breathe life into communities with local arts projects to regenerate people's minds and spirits? The Government wisely doesn't pretend to know all the answers yet. Maybe some problems don't have answers. But this ambitious programme will be the centrepiece of all New Labour's best hopes. If they can make a real difference to the lives of people in these wastelands they will create a social revolution that hasn't been tried since Attlee's days.

Britain must seize the chance to help ethnic Albanians left homeless by the Serb offensive

Send our engineers

Jonathan Steele

THEY discuss. They deliberate. They doodle. As disaster looms for hundreds of thousands of refugees in Kosovo, European and American policymakers pass the buck and hicker over whose fault it is. When refugees from the first wave of Serb artillery attacks struggled over the mountains into Albania in May or wandered through the villages of Western Kosovo in the search for shelter, British and American leaders talked robustly of Nato air strikes. Now with 10 times as many people made homeless, including at least 50,000 living rough in the hills while winter approaches, the West seems paralysed.

The military planners looked into the options for strikes against the Serbs and apparently did not like what they saw. Politicians worried about the reaction to casualties and lost their

nerve. Russia's potential veto of a Security Council resolution for hostile action was touted as an excuse, even though no serious effort was made to win the Russians over.

That could still be done, if the West made a major issue of the threat to regional peace which President Slobodan Milosevic's actions are causing as well as his breaking of the promise to halt the fighting which he made to the Russians this summer.

Even if military intervention remains off limits, there are other ways for the West to take decisive action. The refugee crisis that Milosevic has created provides an opportunity as well as a threat. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees already has a recognised mandate in Kosovo. The need to reconstruct houses and get people back to their villages is accepted even by the Belgrade authorities. However hollow it may be, they have appealed

— in a way which the Serbs never did during the ethnic cleansing of the Bosnian war — for displaced people to go home. The West should seize the chance. Every Western country has a regiment of professional builders, whether it be the Royal Engineers in the Brit-

Even Belgrade has accepted the need to get the Kosovo refugees housed

ish Army or the US Corps of Engineers. Why not send large contingents of these soldiers immediately, under the aegis of the UNHCR, to help reconstruct Kosovo's villages? They would provide an urgent service which the limited manpower of the UNHCR cannot cover before the cold of winter hits. They would give priceless psychological and

political reassurance to the beleaguered Albanian majority of the Serb-run province. They would not require a Security Council vote.

The pessimists will complain that this would repeat the experience of the UN Protection Force in Bosnia, where British, French, and other troops gave cover to humanitarian aid convoys without stopping the war or changing the political equation. It could create targets for hostage-takers and snipers. While these arguments carry weight, Kosovo is different from Bosnia. The demographic and strategic environment here is no comparison. There is only one army and police force in Kosovo and it is overstretched. It has virtually no Serb civilians in the countryside to back it up. The terrain is less mountainous than Bosnia, with less opportunity for ambush. Above all, those armies which sent their engineers to help the UNHCR would make clear that their

rules of engagement were different from UNPROFOR's. Besides carrying side-arms and having armoured vehicles, they would need infantry contingents with them as back up from day one. Hostile action against them would be met with air strikes against targets throughout Serbia.

The political framework for such an intervention need not change from the one Belgrade has already accepted: talks between the Serbs and Albanians on greater autonomy while Kosovo's final status is put on hold for the next three years.

But the crucial step is to get an international protectorate in place as soon as possible. Uniformed men with a credible back-up are the only people who can lead the way. Besides helping the thousands of refugees, they would put the spine back into European and American policy and end the scandal of today's pathetic drift.

Jonathan Steele

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'Any senator who voted for impeachment would declare open season on his own life'
Ian Campbell, Letters

Too close for comfort

US feels the global pinch

THE FINANCIAL hurricane that wreaked such havoc in East Asia and Russia has now blown into the US's own backyard — South America. It is threatening to topple economies hitherto regarded as model examples of the benefits of swallowing Western economic medicine. Brazil, which accounts for around 45 per cent of Latin America's GDP, is in the front line. If it is forced to devalue the real against its dollar, then Argentina — which sends 33 per cent of its exports to Brazil — won't be far behind. A beggar-thy-neighbour chain reaction of devaluations could follow, throwing the whole area into turmoil and reversing the impressive economic progress made in recent years. America can no longer pretend that the global financial crisis is happening far away. It has now reached a region which has strong trading links with the US and to which American banks have heavy exposure.

It couldn't have come at a worse time. The IMF is running out of money and President Clinton, preoccupied with political survival, will be hard pushed to find the time to deal with a problem which could soon engulf America. This is not because the US economy is particularly vulnerable. Its underlying economy is in rude health. It is about to complete its seventh successive year combining steady growth with low inflation. But this crisis is not about underlying strengths. It is about confidence. Shares in Brazil have slumped almost 50 per cent as investors have sold and dispatched short-term money

out of the country. Brazil did well to turn the hyper-inflation of recent decades into price rises of only 4 per cent a year. Inflation in Argentina is smaller at only one per cent. But investors have been worried about Brazil's budget deficit (a Maastricht-busting 7 per cent of GDP).

Brazil has raised interest rates to 30 per cent and spent 20 per cent of its reserves (about \$12 billion) to defend its currency but money has still been leaving the country at \$1 billion a day. As in most of Asia, this was a crisis that need not have happened. It's all about panicky outflows of short-term funds driven by a loss of confidence which feeds on itself. But once confidence goes into free fall it is difficult to reverse. The sharp drop in share prices in the US can be explained as a long-overdue correction to an over-inflated market. But if US investors suddenly start to panic as the crisis reaches their backyard anything could happen.

What should be done? Governments must co-ordinate their responses. This doesn't necessarily mean G8 or G16 summits though they have their place. Several decisions could be taken quickly. First, currency realignments must be orchestrated internationally to avoid competitive devaluations that could plunge the world into a 1930s-style recession. If the IMF could extend enough help to prevent China and Brazil from devaluing, then chain reactions in the regions they dominate might be avoided. Second, the time is now ripe for a global reduction of interest rates to boost confidence. Japan reduced its rates last week. There are hints in the air that the US and Britain may do something similar. It can't happen too quickly. Third, the IMF should take advantage of changing world attitudes to negotiate practical controls on short-term movements of "hot" money which have caused so much of the trouble. Once again,

it would be far better if such controls were negotiated internationally so they can be implemented constructively and not unilaterally in a way that aggravates the problem they seek to cure. Finally, rich countries should write off the debts of the very poorest who have no chance of repaying them in full. The money released would be available to buy goods from other countries. It is difficult to think of a more enlightened way of relieving the global crisis.

Starr struck

Congress must get on with it

THE STARR report is long and wrong. His perversion of the office of special prosecutor is a lesson to us all in how, without continuous review, assessment and chopping, governments can grow tentacles which cease to answer to the democratic nerve centre which set them up. Yet the House of Representatives was absolutely right — all credit to Newt Gingrich — to publish in full, immediately. There has been a lot of guff talked about the internet as the handmaiden of community, democracy and other beautiful things. (The view in France *Solr* that the internet has moved from being a sewer to an instrument of mob justice is equally absurd, as well as conveying a typically French hauteur about American democracy that dates at least from de Tocqueville.) What the internet proved this past weekend was how good a tool it is for disseminating bulky and complicated material — and who was it said the new electronic media would kill prose? In this "global village" it turns out, again, to be the Americans who provide the talking points. They allow the rest of us to map our own experience by reference to their encounters with modernity, gender,

the mass media and above all the accountability of democratic politicians. Thanks to them, we live and learn.

So this is turning out to be an episode to confirm John Stuart Mill's every precept. Information does not guarantee sensible judgment but it surely is a precondition for it. Having accessed the material or old-fashionedly, just read about it, the American public is responding. The polls say it rejects impeachment. Impatiently, Americans want their political class to resolve this issue and move on. Middle America's practical will is that American legislators quickly do what the constitution says is their job by policing the presidency. Here, if they are clever, is a card for the Democrats: Clinton showed in 1996 the public will punish the Republicans for disrupting federal business. In practical terms this implies a vote of censure on the president after some kind of plea bargain (involving both an end to the presidential pretence that he did not commit perjury and a resolution reining in Starr). The coolness of American public opinion is the most startling aspect of the affair. A public weaned on Jerry Springer is showing unwonted maturity. Only a fool, blind to history, would say popular judgment is always right. But only an authoritarian would say public judgment should not be formed on the same basis of information as those inside government possess.

A bitter pill

Viagra should be on the NHS

MINISTERS were being accused of indecision yesterday following their announcement of a temporary ban on NHS prescriptions for Viagra, the new "wonder drug" for impotence, which is due to be given its

European licence today. The frustration of medical specialists is understandable. The debate over the drug has been continuing for months. It is already available in the US, where clinical trials have demonstrated its effectiveness. Two different impotence drugs are already available on the NHS but one requires an injection in the penis and the other an insertion of a pellet into the urethra. Viagra can be taken as a tablet. Hence its appeal. Only three months ago, ministers signalled their intention of allowing the new drug to be prescribed "to meet identified clinical need". They were already aware then of potential patient numbers. About three million men suffer from impotence. What's changed ministerial minds?

Money, according to the Health Secretary. He expressed concern that the new drug had created expectations which could prove "a serious drain" distorting already established NHS priorities. That's why the Health Secretary's move is so bold. This is the first time that a drug of known efficacy has been banned on cost grounds across the entire country. Previous governments have preferred to pass the buck down to health authorities below them. This created the worst form of health rationing: postcode prescribing where a patient's chance of obtaining a drug depended on where they lived. A national health system needs a national approach. Labour is already committed to setting up a new agency, which among other things will vet expensive new procedures. Here is a good issue with which to launch NICE, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence. A special drugs panel within the agency could cut through the hype. Earlier estimates, which put Viagra's cost to the NHS at £1 billion, have already been cut to £50 million. Impotence is a genuine medical condition, which a comprehensive NHS should be ready to treat.

Letters to the Editor

On Blair and breast power

PAUL Coggins MP appears to believe (Letters, September 11) that the Guardian/ICM poll shows that those polled think Tony Blair is now less experienced than he was. What it does show is that, after seeing him in office over the last year, more people now perceive him to be inexperienced. Chris Jordan.

SYMPATHISE with Manchester United, Aston Villa and other fans of Premier League clubs as predators like Rupert Murdoch and other transnational media bosses hover over their pride and joy. I left the Labour Party when the same people took that over. Frank Riley, Skeithersdale, Lancs.

At whose expense were six policemen deployed to flank the vicar on arrival for the ceremony (Low-key wedding gives Scary what she really wants, September 14)? There must be some residents of Thames Valley who will agree it is a sad reflection that it is necessary to deploy police to escort a vicar to church. John Thompson, Newport.

If the Spice Girls have as much clout as has been suggested, then just think of the effect they could have on the rates of young mothers opting to breast-feed their babies. A few public demonstrations would do wonders for breaking the taboo. Come on girls — Breast Power, Cath Staincliffe, Manchester.

WHILE tea contains lots of anti-oxidants, it is probably useful in disease prevention (Report, September 14) let's not be too carried away. I drank gallons of the stuff before my heart attack in 1980. Since then I have improved prognosis mightily, losing lots of weight and cholesterol on a strictly low-fat, mainly vegetarian diet. Phil Harris, Cornhill on Tweed, Northumberland.

If the hedgehogs in the Outer Hebrides introduced to control slugs are now a plague (British Association report, September 11), the answer is to introduce their natural predator — the motor car. Chris Wigzell, Tonbridge, Kent.

Monica and misogyny

MARTIN Kettle's "report" on Monica Lewinsky's role in the affair is nothing more than old-fashioned misogyny (Kiss and tell routine of woman who hoped she could have it all, September 14). While Starr's report shows that she was an extremely willing partner, she simply cannot be equally responsible for the consequences. Bill Clinton is President; the responsibility attached to this is his alone. Bill Clinton is married and he chose to betray his wife.

Neither of those things have anything to do with Monica Lewinsky. She was a 22-year-old unpaid White House worker who, by her own evidence, "had a crush" on Clinton. This does not make her the monster that Martin Kettle would like to present her as. His approach is the third old one of creating a "sexually voracious" woman and blaming her. Polly Clark, Oxford.

I AM disgusted that journalists on this newspaper should join the parade of pups snapping at Clinton's heels. He may have his weaknesses as a man, but he has his strengths as a president. He has taken on the tobacco lobby, the gun lobby and the medical profession on behalf of the poor who could not afford proper medical care. And

what have the press decided it all comes down to? A semen-stained dress. Adam Kinnemel, London.

IT IS hardly surprising that the Senate majority leader is seeking to avoid impeachment. The votes of two-thirds of the Senate (67). Any Senator who voted for impeachment on the basis of Starr's soft porn would be declaring open season on the media on his/her own personal life, a fate already suffered by Republican stalwarts Congressman Dan Burton and Congresswoman Helen Chenoweth. Are there 67 volunteers in the Senate? Ian Campbell.

THE House of Representatives will not impeach Clinton because he has infringed the moral code and the law of the land, but because he has become a figure of fun. The proudest nation on earth cannot afford to be represented by a laughing stock. Simone Crawley, Stockport.

THE likely impoverishment of American leadership during the forthcoming months whilst the President himself as well as both houses of Congress become focused on "sipping" is alarming. Others may chance their arm,

perceiving the President's eye to be off the ball, and he may be tempted to rash responses to gain some favourable media coverage.

Any public official under investigation for a possible misconduct would be suspended on full pay during the investigations with the prospect of reinstatement if they are exonerated. Dr Robert Upshall, Darlington.

AN imperial presidency no more. The Madisonian principles that governed American politics until the outbreak of the second world war, and have lain dormant through the long years of the Cold War, are once again relevant. The strange death throes of this imperial presidency will see any future commander-in-chief more beholden to Congress, as power inexorably flows from the White House.

Perhaps this change is inevitable, given the end of the cold war, but Bill Clinton must have sped up the process. Given the Republican control of both Houses and little prospect of change in the future, a new right agenda which seeks to overturn itself in its most bellicose of rhetoric will hold sway. There will be no resolution of the Palestinian problem and Russia can expect nothing but historic animosity. Kevin Peters, Portsmouth.

A comprehensive look at schools

SCOTLAND provides a good example of a very successful comprehensive education system (Letters, September 10). It has been established for over 25 years and 96 per cent of children in Scotland attend comprehensive, mixed state schools.

The results have been impressive: 80 per cent of pupils stay on after 16, more pupils gain more certificates at 16, more pupils gain higher grades (97 per cent gain five or more Standard Grades); 30 per cent gain three or more Higher passes (university entrance exams). Several generations of teachers have been highly qualified, fully trained and registered after two provisional years, which also helps. Scotland also has the highest percentage per population of graduates in Europe, so it seems the comprehensive sys-

tem has served pupils in Scotland well. Susan Forde, Edinburgh.

THE most disturbing thing I've read recently was not the allegations about Clinton, but Julie Burchill's *Beast Days* of my life (Weekend, September 12). I know where she is coming from; it's where she's going to that worries me. Thirty years later, I work for one of the largest educational psychology services in the country. Things haven't changed much. Education is not meeting the needs of all

children. Every day we meet some of the casualties: they could get charter marks for disruption and destruction.

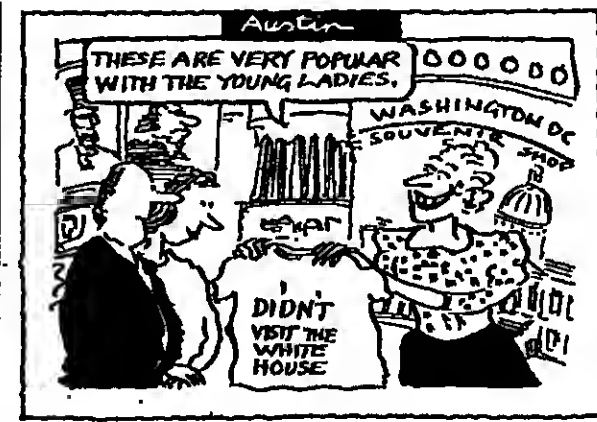
Ms Burchill's counsel of despair seems to be that because "profoundly thick children" will not succeed in school, it is better to "let them leave". To set out to create an underclass deliberately deprived of education seems like a great way to grow more disruption and destruction. Somehow I don't think Ms Burchill would want them living in her backyard, nor hanging around with her beloved son.

Perhaps Ms Burchill's piece was tongue in cheek. It sounds fashionably Blairite, but I believe we owe these kids a useful education. Showing them the door won't help. Those, with limited ability need more education not less, and a better education, not just more of the same. Cliff Turner, Winchester.

I AM concerned at the misleading use of the term "sanctions" in Ian Black's report (UK calls for new sanctions after Burma opponents held, September 10). The UK has no economic sanctions

(using the term in its proper sense) in place with regard to Burma. Current UK policy on Burma is "not to encourage" trade, investment and tourism; rather more passive position than the claimed active discouragement, and one that puts absolutely no legal obstacle in the way of any British company wanting to invest in Burma, as evidenced by the continued involvement of Britain's Premier Oil.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address and day-time telephone number. We may edit letters. It would be helpful if typewritten letters were double-spaced and printed in large type



Our cure for hospital's malady

WE share concerns about the poor value of the proposed new Central London Hospital (CLH) and the College London Hospital (CLH) and the need for a low-rise building at Kings Cross on a "brown field" site, and is designed to give patients views over the Regents Canal and landscaped pools and gardens.

This proposal would provide much better value for money, and be cheaper to run than the current tower-block proposal. It would also be quicker and less disruptive to build. Importantly it would also be self-financing and so could be dealt with outside the formal PFI mechanism. Regrettably, the UCLH Trust has refused to discuss or examine the proposal. Dr Ronnie Pollock, APA Health Planning & Strategy, London.

Flood warning

WHILE we appreciate the overall tenor of your report on the flood situation in Bangladesh (It's rising and rising, I don't think there's anything to stop the water coming, September 10), we cannot but express our surprise at your attitude towards the role of the army in the present relief operations.

You write "The call to the armed forces is an admission of defeat for the Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina Wazed, who has insisted that the civilian administration could cope." The fact is that in Bangladesh, as elsewhere, the military have always been called upon to assist in the task of relief and rehabilitation when societies have been laid low by natural disaster. In China, the People's Liberation Army has aided the civil administration in flood relief operations. You appear to suggest that the civilian administration of Sheikh Hasina operates in a system that leaves the nation's armed services out in the cold.

Rapid rebuttal

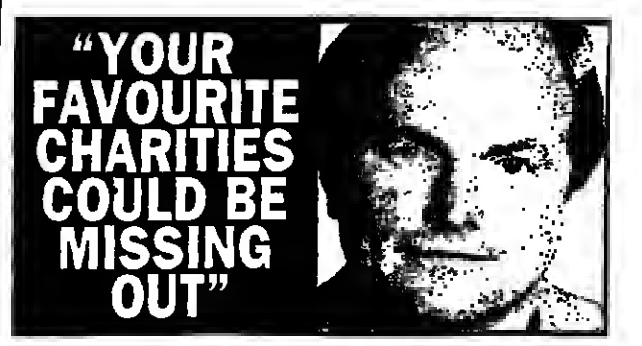
YOUR coverage of our interim results refers to a drop in our Express and Express on Sunday circulation figures for the first six months of this year (Pollack pause, September 10). The article fails to mention that readership figures have been improving and are up by 2.2 per cent in the first half of the year for the Sunday paper. Also, the numbers in your piece are inaccurate. Circulation for the daily has dropped by 4.8 per cent and not 6.5 per cent. The Express is performing admirably in tough markets and our investments are starting to become apparent in our most recent figures. Circulation was up for August and the paper is attracting an increasingly younger readership. Ricardo Tejada, Director of Communications, United News and Media, London.

YOUR correspondent, Steve Thomas (September 10), has got it wrong. As chairman of an Electricity Consumers' Committee (ECC), I am not an Offer employee doing my duty as he alleges. I and 18 other ECC chairmen were appointed by the Secretary of State to head statutory committees. Our task is to safeguard the customers' interest, and this we do.

'London versus the rest' policy won't help the regions

PETER Hetherington (Analysis, September 10) misses out two key issues on regional policy. Industrial employment in Britain has halved since the mid-1980s. Traditional regional policy worked on the basis of bringing in new, expanding industries to replace jobs in declining industries. But for a generation we have been short of expanding industries. The real issue is the continued failure of successive governments (including New Labour) to create macro-economic conditions favourable to industrial growth, or to produce a coherent industrial development strategy.

The nature of the regional problem has also changed. London is shown as having a higher unemployment rate than Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the North West, and Yorkshire and Humberside. That would have been unthinkable a decade ago. The "London versus the rest" message is now simplistic. There are large pockets of intense economic deprivation in inner London — and on a smaller scale in all our major cities. New jobs in London or Liverpool or Newcastle or wherever would not necessarily get to the heart of the problem, as the people in less affluent areas are often trapped at the end of the job queue, behind potential incomers. The person-specific aspects of the New Deal, aimed at improving employability, are to be welcomed, but their effectiveness is likely to be limited if this is the sole government action. Attention needs to be given to the processes which entrap the unemployed in zones of economic deprivation. Policies should be directed towards giving younger people especially access to buoyant labour markets; filling empty housing in declining areas is likely merely to reinforce the inner-city trap. Dr Colin Crouch, Harrow Weald, Middlesex.



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CAF

George Wallace

Rednecks, race and repentance

GEORGE Wallace, who has died aged 79 of respiratory and cardiac arrest, will go down in American history as the racist bigot who probably did more than any other 20th century politician to improve the situation of his country's black citizens. That, of course, was never his intention. But the extremity of his views as governor of Alabama, the image of him blocking Alabama University's doors in June 1963 to stop two black students enrolling, and the decision of his police chief, Bull Connor, to unleash snapping dogs on peaceful demonstrators in the industrial city of Birmingham deeply shocked middle America.

Within a year Congress had passed a greatly strengthened Civil Rights Act, which was swiftly followed by a Voting Rights Act, enabling the federal government to stop southerners using legal manoeuvres to prevent black voter registration. The political landscape of the South was never the same again.

At first Wallace battled on, with considerable success. In the early Democratic primaries of the 1964 presidential campaign, he secured up to 43 per cent of the vote but, to avoid splitting the right-wing vote, withdrew from the contest when Senator Barry Goldwater won the Republican nomination. In 1968 he again ran, as a third party candidate, with the former head of Strategic Air Command, General Curtis LeMay, as running mate. Their campaign clearly cost Richard Nixon the White House when 10 million people voted for Wallace's American Independent Party.

In the 1972 presidential campaign, having reverted to the Democrats, Wallace secured impressive primary victories in five states, including the northern industrial stronghold of Michigan — causing considerable anxiety to the Democrats, and to the Nixon White House, which regarded a right-wing Democratic candidate as its most serious challenge. Then, during a campaign appearance in Laurel, Maryland, Wallace was shot and crippled by Arthur Bremer, a disturbed loner. That ended his career in national politics, though he continued to be a powerful force in Alabama for another 14 years, a period which eventually saw a dramatic shift in his political stance.

Wallace had been born just after the first world war in the tiny rural settlement of Clio, Alabama. He spent much of his childhood there, helping with chores around the farm. At high school he turned out to be a skilful boxer, winning the state's bantam-weight title at the age of 17. Then, just as

he had joined the University of Alabama Law School, his father died, and Wallace was obliged to fund his five-year course through a mixture of professional boxing, working as a waiter and kitchen hand, and driving a taxi.

He graduated in 1942 but, with America then plunged into the second world war, he joined the US Army Air Force, and flew nine bombing sorties over Japan as a flight engineer in 1945. Diagnosed with "psychoneurosis" — he had refused post-war training flights — he was discharged, and came home in 1946 to work as one of the state's assistant attorneys general, a fairly low rung on the American legal ladder.

His contacts in this position soon ignited an interest in local politics and, in 1947, he was elected to the state legislature, rapidly emerging as an active and effective operator. He successfully piloted through one measure which brought hundreds of industrial enterprises into Alabama, and another which

'I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny,' he declared. 'And I say, segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever'

funded college and vocational training for the dependents of war casualties.

In 1953 he returned to the law, winning election as a state district judge. There he quickly gained a useful reputation as "the fighting judge" through his defiance of the federal authorities' investigation into Alabama's discrimination against black voters.

By this time Wallace had also become a leading figure in the local Democratic Party, the only political force which then mattered in the state. In particular he was very close to the larger-than-life governor, Jim Folsom, and relied on that connection to sustain his own gubernatorial bid in 1958 — state law prevented the governor succeeding himself.

With more than 250,000 votes, Wallace came second in the primary. As an obvious leading contender he was of

fered formal support by the Ku Klux Klan, which he rejected. As a result he was endorsed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in the run-off against the other leading contender. His opponent, to whom the KKK had shifted its allegiance, won by a narrow margin after a blatantly racist campaign.

Wallace told friends he had lost because he had been "out-segg'd", and vowed it would never happen again. In 1962 Folsom decided to make another bid for the governorship, but badly blotted his copybook by turning up blind drunk for a campaign rally. Wallace was immediately drafted on to the ticket and launched a ferociously segregationist campaign. "I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny," he declared. "And I say, segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." He was elected by the largest vote ever achieved by an Alabama governor.

The white voters who backed him were plainly fearful of the increasing influence of Martin Luther King, whose non-violent resistance to segregation was spreading through the South. Just after Wallace's election, King organised sit-ins at lunch counters in Birmingham, which refused to serve black customers. He and hundreds of other demonstrators came under ferocious assault by the police and were thrown in jail. As a direct consequence of these events, King organised the March on Washington, forever famous for his "I have a dream" address.

In 1965, as his governorship neared its end, Wallace tried to force a constitutional amendment through the legislature allowing him to succeed himself. It failed by three votes and he then persuaded his wife, Lurleen, to run for the office. After her only visible opponent was killed in a plane crash, she won the 1966 election but died of cancer after two years in office.

In 1970 Wallace was again eligible to run and produced another ferociously racist campaign, which returned him to the governor's mansion. Two years previously the state legislature had amended the constitution to allow a governor two successive terms so, in spite of his paralysis from the assassination attempt, he was easily re-elected in 1974.

During these two terms he embarked on a massive expansion of Alabama's highways and education systems. But he was out of tune with the times. The continued resistance to the civil rights movement in Birmingham and the state's other major cities, saw a rapid emigration of skilled

workers, black and white. The Birmingham steel industry declined, as did the shipyards of Mobile. Even the landmark power stations of the Tennessee Valley Authority, monuments to the state's recovery from the Great Depression, fell on hard times.

In personal terms, life became steadily tougher for Wallace. He was confined to a wheelchair and in constant pain from his wounds. His sight was failing and his hearing deteriorated to a point where people could only communicate with him in writing. He also lost control of many of his bodily functions and, in his final years, developed Parkinson's disease.

But he underwent a remarkable personal conversion. One Sunday morning in 1979 the black congregation of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in the state capital, Montgomery, was started to see a lonely white man being wheeled down the aisle by his black assistant. Governor Wallace had come to say sorry. "I've learned that suffering means," he said, "I think I can understand something of the pain black people have come to endure. I know I contributed to that pain and I can only ask your forgiveness." A year later he made a public statement renouncing his segregationist views.

AND the black electorate did forgive him. When Wallace ran for his final term as governor in 1982, he secured 90 per cent of the state's black vote. In office, he pulled together what became known as the Wallace Coalition, forged from trade unions, black political organisations, and other liberal elements. He appointed a black press secretary and nominated nearly 200 black members to Alabama's governing boards. He also set out to double the number of blacks in the electoral register.

But the traditional hold of the Democrats had been weakened by broader national trends, and Wallace retired in 1986 to watch Republicans gradually taking over his state. They faced an uphill struggle to undo the political and economic legacy the governor's populist intolerance had inflicted on Alabama. It is still going on.

Wallace is survived by a son and three daughters from his marriage to Lurleen. In 1971, he married Cornelia Suiter, they were divorced in 1978. In 1981, he married a county singer, Lisa Taylor. They divorced in 1987.

Harold Jackson

George Corley Wallace, politician, born August 25, 1912; died September 13, 1998



Primary colours... Wallace campaigning for the US presidency in 1968, when he drew 10 million votes

Yang Shangkun

The man behind the massacre

YANG Shangkun, who has died aged 92, began adult life in the heady Chinese student movement of the 1920s, studied in Stalinist Moscow, took part in the Long March, and helped steer the Chinese Red Army to victory first over the Japanese and then Chiang Kai-shek.

But like most other veterans of the Chinese revolution — and he was the last but one of the surviving "eight immortals" — his life falls into two halves; before and after the communist victory of 1949. Even the official obituary issued yesterday reflects the difference in tone.

Whereas in 1937 Yang is described as "boosting the mass movement against Japanese aggression," two decades later we find him "organising the re-adjustment and improvement of the work institutions of the general office of the Communist Party's central committee."

Yang's name emerges from the murky official lists and obscure job descriptions in the mid-1980s. By this time a powerful figure in Guangdong province, next to Hong Kong, he backed fellow-Sichuanese Deng Xiaoping to promote the economic reforms which have now, for

better or worse, transformed China.

When Deng stepped down in 1987, exercising moral blackmail on most of his colleagues to do the same, Yang stayed on the party politburo and became a member of the People's Republic the next year. This should have been the prelude to many innocuous meetings with foreign heads of state, followed by a peaceful transition into the pleasant life of a veteran high cadre, enjoying the seaside of Hainan island or the fresh air of one of China's sacred mountains.

Instead, within another year Yang had achieved a notoriety which was then attached to his name till he died: he was president when the People's Liberation Army, on the night of June 3, 1989, massacred the people of Beijing who sought to prevent the troops from entering Tiananmen Square. Indeed it was Yang who announced on Chinese television, two weeks earlier, that the army had been brought into the capital.

Yesterday's obituary does not duck the issue. "Together with other leaders of the party and government," it says, "he dealt with the political turmoil of 1989 and helped to maintain the independence, dignity, security and stability of the country." It is for this intervention, rather than for the "glorious and militant" contributions to the revolution hailed by the Xinhua agency, that millions still remember him.

Yang's willingness to approve of Chinese using force against Chinese was not so surprising. Like the other members of the "first generation" of the Long March, he believed that they had earned the right to define China's future, and that this was inconceivable without the continued leadership of the Communist Party.

On the night of May 22 and May 24, the "party elders" —

with an average age of around 80 — met in an informal group convened by Deng. The record of that meeting soon got abroad and was distributed in Tiananmen Square, but the students failed to understand its significance.

It was Yang who led the argument at every decisive point. First, Deng put the question: "If we give way [to the students], to what point should we give way?" "This is the last stone in the dam," replied the president: "If we take it out, everything will collapse."

Two days later, as they were over the same argument, Yang drove the same argu-

ment to its ultimate point. "If we gave ground, we would fall from power. The Chinese People's Republic would lose power; capitalism would be restored. Just as the American [John Foster] Dulles had hoped, after several generations our socialism would turn into liberalism."

The students in Tiananmen Square also conveyed to veterans like Yang an echo of the Red Guard movement of the cultural revolution — when Yang himself had been accused of conspiring against Chairman Mao. But the more fundamental reason for using force against them was simply stated above; the party must stay in power.

As so often in Chinese politics, Yang equated party with personal power. His younger

half-brother, Yang Baibing, was the army's top political commissar and took the lead in suppressing the students. In the sudden mood of post-Tiananmen Beijing, there was whispered talk of the rise of a new dynasty of "Yang Family Generals" (playing on the title of a famous Chinese opera).

The octogenarians were not inhibited by age; factional jockeying between the Yang clique and the Deng party led to the enforced retirement of both Yangs in 1993. Yang's successor as president, Jiang Zemin, helped to curb his influence in the army.

Early this year Yang showed he was still a political force by visiting Hong Kong. As he sits with the chief executive, demonstrators threw eggs at the gateway. It may be as well that he was not in a position to call in the troops.

A photograph of him soon after the Long March shows a stocky cheerful figure. He remained both, whether wearing army uniform or the civilian clothes of president. But he only understood the need to modernise in narrow terms; he did not share Deng's equivocal flirtation, at least till 1988, with political experiment.

Two years ago Yang visited the revolutionary base of Yanan to talk about old times with local peasants. Perhaps, in his last days he remembered them again. On his deathbed, he asked the central committee, we are told, to ensure that his funeral is a simple one in the light of this summer's catastrophic floods, which have made hundreds of thousands in the countryside homeless. Even the party is no match for nature.

John Gittings

Yang Shangkun, politician, born 1906; died September 14, 1998

A Country Diary

CHESHIRE: Opening the garden light-trap first thing in the morning is a hazardous job at this time of the year, as it often attracts more wasps than moths. Amongst the more attractive of the early autumn moths that have started to appear are members of a group called the sawflies. Although their wing patterns can be quite variable, most show a basic colouration of orange-yellow with some darker markings, which overall resembles that of an autumn leaf.

A much larger species that has been attracted to the light in some quantity is the red underwing, which has a wing span of about three-and-a-half inches. With its mottled grey forewings, this triangular-shaped moth can be almost impossible to pick out at rest on a tree trunk, but if disturbed it flies away quite err-

atically, like the yellow underwing moths of summer, flashing its bright red hind wings in an attempt to confuse predators.

A moth that can be prolific in autumn is the elver-y, and although few have come to the trap so far, on a recent walk along the edge of the common, I was continually disturbing them from where they were feeding amongst the heather and purple moor grass. The common is home for another insect whose flight period is the early autumn, but which has a more specific habitat requirement than the moths — the black darter dragonfly. This is the smallest of our dragonflies, and its breeding sites are restricted to acidic, boggy stretches of water, of which there are several dotted around the common.

J.M. THOMPSON

Birthdays

Prince Harry, 14; Rev Prof Peter Ackroyd, theologian, 81; Richard Arnell, composer, film-maker, 81; Charles Bone, painter, 72; Phyllis Cunningham, chief executive, Royal Marsden Hospital, 61; Prof Brian Fender, chief executive, Higher Education Funding Council, 64; Rafael Fruhbeck de Burgos, conductor, 68; Dr Richard Gordon, novelist, 77; Sir Philip Harris, chairman, Carpetright, 56; David Lepper, Labour MP, 52; Clive Merrison, actor, 55; Jessye Norman, soprano, 53; Viscount (John Julius) Norwich, writer and broadcaster, 69; Lady (Mary) Soames, chairman, Royal National Theatre, 78; Oliver Stone, film director, 52; Graham Taylor, football manager, 54; George Walden, former Conservative MP, 59; Alan Whitehead, Labour MP, 48.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN OUR report on the Labour NEC election battle, page 14, September 11, we mistakenly called one of the candidates, Michael Cashman, David in a caption. Apologies. In a sidebar we said Mr Cashman found it "ironic that [his] 22 years as an active Labour Party and trade union member is often eclipsed by three years in *EastEnders*". We mentioned his connection with *EastEnders* four times while overlooking his work as honorary treasurer of Equity, and as a founder of the Stonewall Group.

THE AUTHOR of *Painful Sex*, page 14, G2, September 8, is not Michele Goldman. It is Michele Goldsmith. Sorry.

IN AN article headed, A river runs through it, pages 20 and 21, Friday Review, September 11 — looking forward to Radio 3's Danube Week this week — we said the Danube was the longest river in Europe, the only European river to run from west to east, and never blue. According to Britannica, the Volga is the longest

river in Europe (3690km, compared with the Danube's 2850); the Thames runs from west to east; and the Danube — as the picture accompanying the article showed — looks blue when it's reflecting a clear sky.

IN AN article in Graduate Time Off, on page 48, Media, September 14, the phone number for Raleigh International was wrongly given. It should have been 0171-571-5555. Our apologies.

IN THE Friday Review, July 31, page 18, we commended as our Classical CD of the Week, Weill's *Symphony No 2, Violin concerto and Mahagonny Suite* by the Berlin Philharmonic and Zimmermann, conducted by Mariss Jansons. Unfortunately, we gave it the wrong number. The right one is EMI CDC 7243 5 56373 2 9.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171-

239 9595 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 9697. E-mail: readers@guardian.co.uk

Death Notices

ANNE LEWIS. On the 12th of September 1998, aged 78, suddenly in his sleep, Marcus Francis Lewis, beloved son, unmarried, devoted brother, devoted grandfather, nephew and cousin and previous friend to many. His funeral service will be held on Friday, 19th September at 12 noon at St Nicholas Church, Church Street, London W10 4HJ followed by interment. Flowers/condolences to Andrew Holmes & Son, 22 Whitton Road, Hounslow TW2 2DD, 0181 822 3277.

Engagements

GRACIOUS PADMANABHAN. Son: families are delighted to announce the engagement of Gracious Padmanabhan, eldest daughter of Mrs and Mr. J. Padmanabhan, to the son of Mr and Mrs. M. J. Padmanabhan. The wedding will take place on September 19th at 2.15 pm. Questions to be directed to the V.I. Royal C. & S. (Padmanabhan) via E. White and Son, Ltd, 2nd, 138-140, East Street, London, E1 1AA.



Yang Shangkun... like other veterans of the Long March, he felt he had earned the right to define China's future

مكتبة المجلد

Analysis Social democracy

Pretty in pink

Social democracy is on a roll. This week the Swedes and next week the Germans are voting, and Social Democrats are ahead in the polls. In France they still call themselves socialist and talk in an unBlairite way about rolling back the effects of globalisation. **Ian Traynor** and **David Walker** ask what is behind the left's apparent dynamism.

ONE evening last month, the chairman of Germany's Social Democrats (the SPD), Oskar Lafontaine, took to the stage of the Berliner Ensemble, the theatre made famous by Bertolt Brecht, to round off four hours of comedy, music and electioneering. With the century's end, he mused, the predominance of the centre-left within the national politics of Europe would not come to an end. On the contrary. "The social democratic future is international."

Well, European at least. Herr Lafontaine won't next weekend be flying to New York on Hillary Clinton's invitation to attend the world jamboree on the "Third Way" between free market liberalism and statist intervention. And that is not just because he is busy electioneering. He does not believe there is a third way. The alternative to unbridled globalism is social democracy. The Continent's other great social democratic government, Lionel Jospin's in France, was not even invited to the American bash, even though M. Jospin, on returning from a trip to Washington in June pronounced Bill Clinton "un type de gauche" (1). M. Jospin is unperturbed. The French left is in fine fettle with its talk of regulation and "realistic voluntarism" in economic affairs (meaning recognition of the superior creativity of the free market while underlining its limits).

And not just in France. The European centre-left is looking remarkably buoyant. If the SPD wins Germany's PR system makes an absolute majority unlikely. Gerhard Schröder, its candidate for Chancellor, will step up on a podium already occupied by Blair and Jospin, prime ministers Romano Prodi of Italy (where he heads the broadly centrist-left Olive Tree coalition) and Wim Kok of the Netherlands, another coalition leader. Identifiably social democratic parties hold or share power in Belgium, Aus-

tria, Portugal, Finland, Denmark, the Czech Republic and next weekend Göran Persson looks likely to reconfirm himself as social democratic prime minister in Sweden. The graphic shows how pink the European political map has become.

What underpins the ascendancy is partly the failure of the right, both ideologically and (for example in France) organisationally. It's also political accident — the left has been better at covering its tracks. Left of centre parties have contrived to be pro-European, pro-welfare state and pro governmental activism but also pro monetarism, pro fiscal rigour and increasingly nationalistic in terms of hospitality for immigrants and asylum-seekers.

Oskar Lafontaine has said nothing to undermine the strict autonomy of the Bundesbank. Lionel Jospin talks about being against both the liberalism of *laissez faire* and that of "laissez passer" (i.e. letting more in). Gerhard Schröder is tough on crime.

Yet lately what has energised social democracy is growing confidence that they may have a formula for coping with the perverse effects of "globalisation". "The fate and probable future of West European socialism cannot be separated from that of European capitalism," argues Donald Sassoon (2). And if capitalism globally is in difficulties, its European branches may find the social democratic formula involving varying degrees of state involvement with the economy relatively attractive. Oskar Lafontaine, prime minister of the Saar region, sees globalisation as an occasion for left regrouping (3). In France the left recognises capitalism as a force which goes but does not know where it's going — that's the job of the state.

In practice, social democratic governments prove almost as pragmatic as Britain's Labour Party (which, let's not forget, only gave up its commitment to socialism when it dropped Clause Four in 1994; the German SPD absorbed

itself of its Marxist past as long ago as 1959). It will be fascinating to watch what happens if Gerhard Schröder does become the first Social Democratic Chancellor since Helmut Schmidt was deposed in 1982. Schröder, prime minister of Lower Saxony, is a party maverick and relative stranger in Bonn who has kept his policy cards very close to his chest. Lafontaine will expect a payback, depending on the balance of the vote and the coalition-wrangling, perhaps SPD parliamentary leader or the finance ministry, an important job, as the single currency is introduced in an EU under a German presidency from January 1, 1999.

How significant has Blairism been in the rest of Europe? The answer is that New Labour has only been stylistically important. In a paper examining Gordon Brown's July budget the SPD's thinktank sounded pleasantly surprised: "higher fuel prices, lower welfare contributions, tax cuts for employees and families, investment incentives for small and medium-sized firms, active labour market policies, state subsidies for schools and the health service — this is not the government programme of the left wing of the SPD. It is the programme of the Blair government in the UK which is widely regarded as liberal and pro-business" (4). Yet Swedish social democracy for one has been less than keen to mug up on the New Labour gospel. It is propagating the merits of the welfare-statist "people's home" idea which has kept the centre-left in power for most of the past 80 years through the kind of tax and spend policies that are anathema to Gordon Brown. Göran Persson is pledging to keep tax levels at around 55 per cent and to spend on social services. For its part the SPD is vowing to cut income and corporate taxation and to simplify the system, though less sweepingly than Kohl.

A cynic might observe that European social democracy is increasingly defined by its shadow economics minister, Jost Stollmann, a self-made businessman and non-SPD member who was once a member of Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats, the future "is neither left nor right, not ideological, but pragmatic. It will be a different way our own German way". But what? Dennis McShane, the Germany-watching Blairite, says a win for Schröder would signal a cultural shift across the European Union. Coinciding with expansion to the East and the move to Berlin as the seat of the next German government, the EU is coming into the grip of northern Protestants. The Roman Catholic corporatist

Gerhard Schröder aspires to a vision, tailored to German realities. In the words of his shadow economics minister, Jost Stollmann, a self-made businessman and non-SPD member who was once a member of Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats, the future "is neither left nor right, not ideological, but pragmatic. It will be a different way our own German way". But what? Dennis McShane, the Germany-watching Blairite, says a win for Schröder would signal a cultural shift across the European Union. Coinciding with expansion to the East and the move to Berlin as the seat of the next German government, the EU is coming into the grip of northern Protestants. The Roman Catholic corporatist

Kohl, Jacq François Mitterrand, of them seared by the memory and experience of World War Two, would (so this story goes) be supplanted by a less zealous, more pragmatic northern school of mercantilists. Free traders of the centre-left, Blair, Schröder, Kok, Jospin — he too is a Protestant — are uninhibited by the past, having minimal personal experience of the Nazis and the Holocaust. It is a new idea, a new generation of beer-swilling leaders elbowing aside their wine-tipping elders and establishing a modern version of the Hanseatic League, but sadly it does not however amount to much. Oskar Lafontaine turns out to be a Jesuit-schooled Francophile with a fine nose for good red wine. More so even than Kohl. Lafontaine sees the Franco-German axis and its reinvigoration as a key to the new Europe, to the success of the single currency to the struggle to adapt to and maintain the generous welfare systems of both countries, and to tackling the paramilitary challenge confronting both Jospin and the would-be Schröder adminis-

trations. With some seven million of their citizens unemployed, Germany and France have 40 per cent of the EU's jobless. Working with his counterpart in Paris, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, a fluent German speaker, Lafontaine envisages a new Elysée Treaty pushing Europe-wide macroeconomic policies aimed at job creation. If Lafontaine gets his way, Germany's EU presidency "will support the jobs proposals of the French government", proposals opposed both by Blair and Kohl. It is a third way, perhaps, but not one derived from the Anglo-American model. "Jobs is the decisive criterion, not company profits or share prices." (5). But how? Lafontaine is convinced that the time is ripe for a new, international centre-left campaign to renew that project of civilising capitalism: "The international financial markets don't need deregulation, but more regulation. Politics and international order have to regain their rightful place after the declaration of war from the neoliberals." At

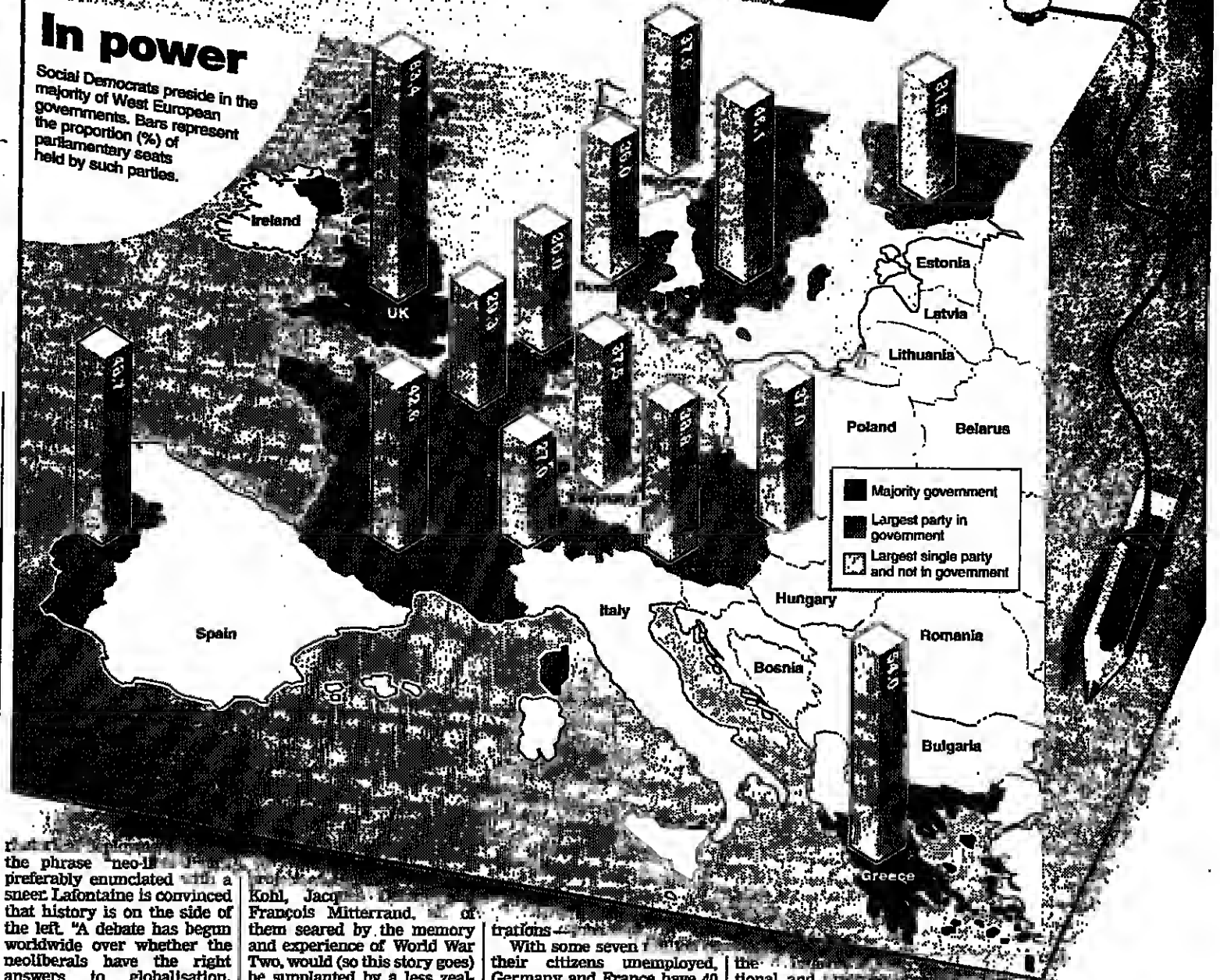
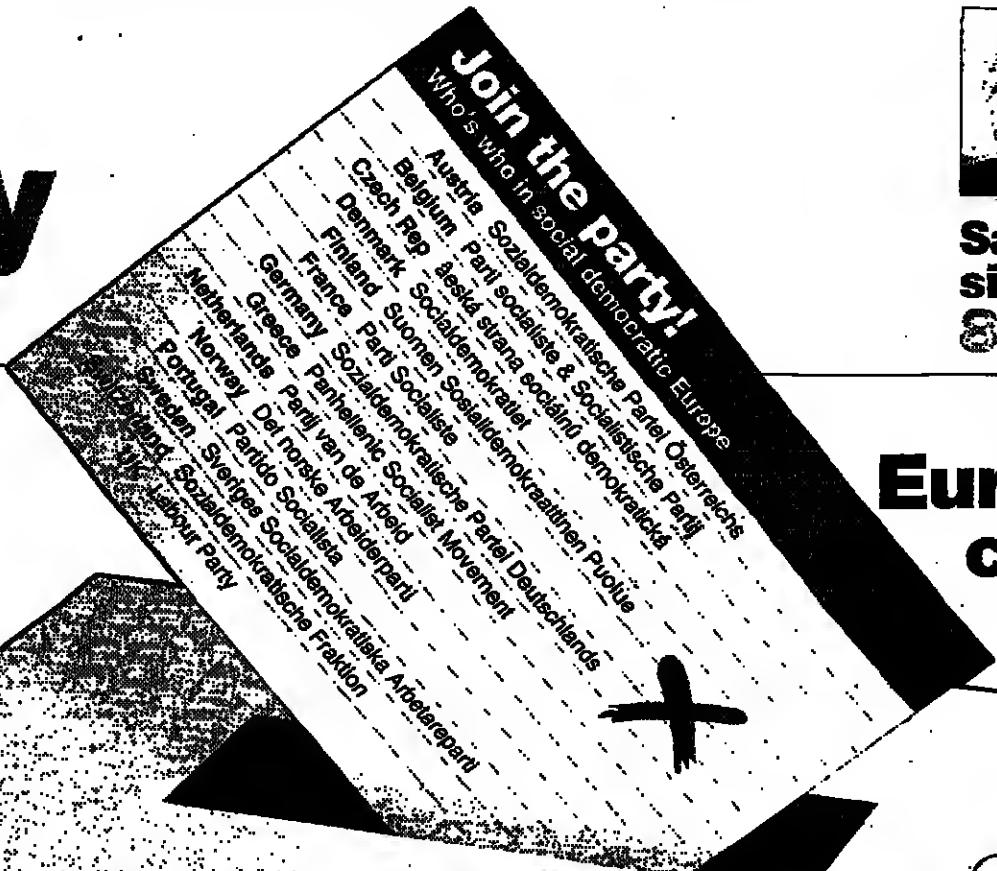
the same time, he urges "exchange rate stabilisation, interest rate policy geared to stability and growth, budgets geared to jobs, fair taxation policies, common technology policies, an international social charter, policies against the global threat to the environment, and sustained strengthening of domestic demand." That must mean an activist policy by the European Union of a kind no one has hitherto contemplated, coordinating and integrating policies on tax and employment. Writing three years ago Donald Sassoon concluded that social democracy in Europe was not an ideology defeated by the superior organisation and the political strength of its opponents, as communism had been. It is a part of "a fin de siècle turmoil reshaping the planet at momentous speed". But while that has often been a counsel of defeatism, on the French and German left it is now an intellectual and policy chal-

lenge. Whatever else, it's intended to be a formula for excluding the right: the hope is that the new revisionism will keep the centre-left in power for a generation.

Sources: (1) Jospin: *libéral antilibéral* in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 3-9 September 1998; (2) Donald Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism*, 1996; (3) Oskar Lafontaine, *Christa Müller, No Fear of Globalisation*, Prosperity and Jobs For All, 1998; (4) Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung paper, July 1998; (5) a seminar in Berlin's Hotel Maritim, August 19 1998. Graphics sources: <http://www.lpu.org/english/portweb.htm>; *People in Power*, July 1998, Cambridge International Reference on Current Affairs. Graphics: Paddy Allen. Research: Matthew Keating and Jane Crinnion. Ian Traynor is the Guardian's Bonn correspondent and David Walker edits "Analysis".



Saving the sink estates



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Finance Guardian

Rising markets boosted by leaders' pledge to co-ordinate expansion



Cost of living... An elderly Russian checks prices in St Petersburg as finance minister Mikhail Zadornov says he aims to print no more roubles

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXANDER DEMANCHUK

G7 sets growth agenda

Mark Milner
Deputy Financial Editor

THE world's top bankers and finance ministers last night delivered an extra fillip to financial markets already boosted by expectations that the United States will avoid the political uncertainties of a presidential impeachment.

Central bank governors and finance ministers from the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries pledged co-ordinated action to help boost growth — a move which markets are likely to interpret as a signal that lower interest rates are on the way.

The announcement came at the end of a European trading day which had seen share prices recover strongly, helped by a strong showing on Wall Street on Friday and another 200 point gain in early dealings yesterday.

The Frankfurt stock market was up almost 3 per cent, Paris by nearly 4 per cent while Milan was more than 5 per cent up on the day.

London, too, was in buoyant mood, with the FTSE 100 share index up 150 points at 5208.50.

"The positive sentiment is overwhelming," said Donald Selkin, chief market strategist at Joseph Gunzner. "The bad news on Clinton has been discounted, and there is a feeling of interest rate cuts in the air."

Earlier Mr Clinton had de-

New mission statement

□ Inflation is low or falling in many parts of the world, and in view of the slow-down in demand in a number of economies — especially among emerging market nations — the balance of risks in the world economy has shifted.

□ G7 is committed to preserve or create conditions for sustainable domestic growth and financial stability in its own economies. Close co-operation is seen as important at this juncture.

□ Courageous measures are being taken in emerging economies and significant progress made towards stability and recovery.

□ G7 is to explore ways to reinforce existing programmes in support of growth-orientated policies, with accelerated efforts to promote programmes for corporate and financial sector restructuring, along with improved transparency of policymaking.

□ G7 is to consider measures to alleviate the effects of the crisis on the poorest, if necessary via augmented financial assistance.

□ "Particularly important" is that countries take appropriate steps to strengthen policies and improve confidence. Those embracing unilateral action on debt rather than reform and co-operation hurt the prospects for their own economies and for the world.

□ G7 is to encourage a co-operative approach to support those countries adversely affected by developments in global markets and which are implementing strong economic programmes.

□ Concern expressed about the extent of the general withdrawal of funds from emerging markets without respect to the diversity of prospects facing those countries, and the significant progress that has been made in many countries in carrying out strong economic and structural reforms.

□ Agreement made on the urgency of the early implementation of the IMF quota increase.

□ IMF is to remain at the centre of the system.

However, a similar message to the G7 ministers and bankers, calling for policies aimed at stimulating economic growth rather than fighting inflation. Last night's statement is likely to gain added weight within financial markets because it is endorsed by the central bankers who have the responsibility for setting interest rates.

meeting," said Richard Urwin, head of investment research at Gartmore Investment Management.

"It was an important step for the US to exert leadership in this situation," said Stuart Brown, head of emerging markets research at Banque Paribas in London. "We desperately need more of this. We need the likes of [Federal Reserve chairman] Greenspan and [Treasury Secretary] Rubin involved and we need to get the Japanese activated."

Shares in banks have been among those hardest hit by the market turbulence as they have unveiled the scale of provisions against possible losses in Asia and Russia.

Russian authorities called on western banks yesterday not to launch legal action to recover losses suffered when Moscow declared a moratorium on repayment of up to \$30 billion of foreign loans.

The government called for "a responsible and constructive approach by all interested parties regarding the resolving of issue of Russian bank foreign currency debt". It asked investors "to refrain from legal actions until mutually agreeable results are reached through negotiations".

The appeal came as international law firm Baker & McKenzie warned that the Russian authorities had laid themselves open to legal challenge because the moratorium and subsequent debt restructuring had not been approved by parliament.

"To improve the situation we need more than just a

Output price rises at 30-year low

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

PRICES of goods leaving British factories are rising more slowly than at any time since the late 1960s as hard-pressed manufacturers slash prices in an attempt to fend off stiff overseas competition.

Data released yesterday by the Office for National Statistics showed that industry's output prices rose by only 0.5 per cent in the year to August from 0.8 per cent in the 12 months to July.

The fall in the annual rate of increase, to its lowest level since June 1967, raised hopes that the absence of inflationary pressure might prompt a rate cut by the Bank of England's monetary policy committee.

The Chancellor, Gordon

Brown, said yesterday that the economy was on course to meet the forecasts. He made in his Budget, six months ago of between 2 per cent and 2.5 per cent growth this year and between 1.75 per cent and 2.25 per cent for 1999.

Despite a warning from one of the MPC's members that domestically-generated inflation in Britain is too high, some dealers believe the Bank may reduce the cost of borrowing by the end of the year.

"The news on inflation at the factory-gate level just gets better," CIBC World Markets economist David Coleman said.

"It is difficult to argue otherwise when headline output inflation is the lowest for more than 30 years." Excluding food, drink, tobacco and petroleum — where tariffs charged are influenced by Budget changes — prices are rising at an annual rate of only 0.2 per cent.

Geoffrey Dicks, economist with Greenwich NatWest, said: "Manufacturers are having to cut prices to defend market share against low-cost overseas producers."

According to the ONS's Producer Price Index, factory-gate prices for office machinery and computers fell in August, while the price of other goods fell by 0.1 per cent. The price of services, however, rose by 0.5 per cent.

Notebook

The West wakes from its torpor



Alex Brummer

PRESIDENT Clinton's powerful intervention in the economic crisis rolling around the globe will be seen by his critics as just another attempt to divert attention from the Starr report.

This time though, unlike his missile bombardment of Afghanistan and Sudan, there can be no dispute about the reality of the events surrounding his decisions — along with those of other Group of Seven members.

The world economy is genuinely in trouble. Collapse is directly on the borders of each of the world's major trading blocs.

In Asia, the meltdown elsewhere in the Pacific has deepened the slump inside Japan, worsened the exposure of its banking system, and uncovered fissures inside the industrial state.

The weaknesses in Russia are lapping on the German and euro-area borders, have caused havoc to the European banking system and punctured confidence on the equity markets.

North America, Monica Lewinsky fallout apart, has appeared relatively isolated from all of this — although its trade balance has felt a serious knock-on effect from Asia. However, with the contagion from the emerging markets of eastern Europe to Latin America, the problem is on America's doorstep.

As we saw at the end of 1994, when economic chaos reaches the borders of the US as it did in Mexico — the Clinton administration has always been prepared to clear every obstacle to win its way — even if it causes problems with western allies and Congress. The standard of living of ordinary Americans has been the raison d'être of the Clinton team's approach to the economy.

Last night's co-ordinated statement from the Group of Seven richest industrial countries, coming after a day of intense consultations in London, at the Bank for International Settlements in Basel and in Washington, marks a seminal moment.

The five-point statement makes it clear that President Clinton and the G7 now believe that the balance of risks in the world economy has shifted from combating inflation and fiscal deficits to preserving growth. In other words, the most powerful economies are standing shoulder to shoulder, ready to reduce interest rates if it is felt necessary.

An important aspect of this is that the statement comes with the approval of central bankers. This means in effect that independent central banks, including the Federal Reserve, the Bundesbank and the Bank of England — all of which have control over domestic interest rates — have

bought into the scenario. So Eddie George, for external reasons, may well have some better tidings for the trades unions when today he becomes the first Bank of England Governor to address them.

Standing back from the emerging market crisis, the G7 appears anxious to establish some new ground rules.

First, that IMF policies towards troubled countries should at this point offer encouragement, not just deal with fiscal and trade imbalances. Secondly, that the leading global economies stand ready to lend money to the IMF and direct to Latin American countries, should the problem spiral out of control. Legislation in Congress is important, but not essential to dealing with the emergency.

All of this is sensible stuff and has been obviously necessary for some time. It is a pity, however, that G7 leaders have been so shamelessly slow in plotting a co-ordinated response to what President Clinton has described as potentially the worst crisis in 50 years.

Travel sickness

THE half-million or so investors who decided to spend their building society windfalls on buying Thomson Travel shares rather than that holiday of a lifetime might be feeling sore. The shares have had a torrid time since the float — which came just as the FTSE was reaching a peak — now they learn it is not stock, but profits too, which can go up and down.

In the first half of this year, before-tax profits were \$5.3 million, against \$12.3 million, with the worse results partly blamed on start-up costs and excess capacity in Sweden.

This is fairly remarkable, since in the company's prospectus potential investors were told that market conditions were actually improving in the Nordic countries because of the collapse of a significant competitor.

In fact Thomson's half-year statement reads more like a travel brochure, with a relentless upbeat tone, rather than a realistic release to the stock exchange.

Britain's cool summer will no doubt have helped matters in the current half, when bookings were up by 16 per cent, and the company is seeing a firm improvement in winter bookings for the coming season.

With much of this baked in the cake and the high season now over it is difficult to dispute prospects for this year.

But as the country moves into a winter in which jobs created by inward investment are being shed as a result of the strong pound and global conditions, the economy is slowing down and job insecurity increasing. Prospects for the international economy too are deteriorating fast, and Thomson and other travel operators are exposed to a very cyclical market.

Perhaps small investors should have stuck with the utilities — they at least have a regular income flow.

Tote sees Coral prize if Ladbroke forced to sell

Lisa Buckingham

THE Tote, the Government-owned gambling business, is believed to want to buy another 100 Coral betting shops if Ladbroke is forced to make heavier than expected disposals in order to offset competition worries over the takeover.

Peter Mandelson, the new Trade and Industry Secretary, is expected to announce his decision — possibly this week — on Ladbroke's £363 million purchase of Coral from Bass, the brewing and leisure operation.

Industry sources are divided on whether Mr Mandelson will say no to Ladbroke, forcing the Hilton hotels company to unwind the acquisition, which gives the group about 38 per cent of the licensed betting revenues, and put the rest of the Coral estate up for sale.

Mr Mandelson is keen to establish a business-friendly reputation and there is speculation that he might try to dis-



Peter Mandelson: will he refuse Ladbroke purchase?

tance himself from his predecessor, Margaret Beckett, who is thought to have rejected advice from the Office of Fair Trading that the deal should go ahead with conditions.

Ladbroke, however, is unlikely to escape further disposals to meet competition concerns. The Tote has already bought 134 former Coral outlets and has agreed to acquire another 167.

The organisation, which has a public goal of expanding

its high-street estate to more than 500 units, is now thought to have said it will be in the market for 100 more betting shops.

If that number of shops were sold, Ladbroke's share of off-course betting income would fall to below one-third.

Peter Jones, chairman of the Tote, said recently that he might consider buying the whole of Coral if Ladbroke is forced to sell.

That would increase the size of its estate to more than 600 outlets — not that much smaller than Coral — but other bidders are unlikely to allow any offer to go unchallenged.

After Nomura's purchase of rival William Hill, such a large acquisition would almost certainly be contested by other financial buyers. William Hill has said it would examine the Coral estate if it came on the market, but anything more than seedcorn purchases would run up against the same monopoly buffers which are stifling Ladbroke.

£35bn crime bill exceeds UK's defence spending

Lisa Buckingham

CRIME now costs Britain £35 billion a year — more than the bill for defence and nearly as much as the Government spends on education. Those claims emerge from the latest estimates issued by the Association of British Insurers.

The bill for crime is the equivalent of £31 every week for each household in the country — more than many families spend on food each week. The total cost is only £9 less per home than the cost of the entire National Health Service.

Although the costs of replacing insured property and vehicle crime have fallen, and there has been some reduction in fraud over the past five years, the insurance industry's trade body says there has been a significant increase in the amount spent on police, prisons, prevention and security.

The ABI says that the £31-a-



week bill per household includes £11 for fraud, including deceptions involving benefit payments and credit card swindles, another £5 for security and crime prevention, about £7 for the police and £3 for insurance claims. Insurance fraud alone costs about £500 million a year.

Speaking yesterday to the Police Superintendents' Association's national confer-

ence, which is being held in Bristol, the ABI's deputy director-general, Tony Baker, said: "A bill to the nation of over £35 billion each year makes it essential that money spent on prevention, detection, punishment and compensation is correctly balanced for the future."

The aim must be to try to reduce the total cost over time.

Repeated initiatives between government, the police and industry have failed to halt the increase in the cost of crime to society although insurers claim their efforts have helped reduce the level of property and motor vehicle losses.

Mr Baker said: "We are seeing a fall in the number of recorded offences, particularly burglary and car crime, and this is leading to lower insurance claims and reduced insurance premiums."

"This is being achieved at the price of increases in the amount spent on security and prevention measures, the police and prison service."

Hardy and British Borneo planning £910m oil merger

Terry Macalister

BRITISH BORNEO Petroleum Syndicate and Hardy Oil & Gas yesterday became the latest oil companies to try to stave off the effect of plummeting prices, with a £910 million merger.

And on the day Trades Union Congress leaders castigated "fat cat" executives, it was revealed that John Walsley, chief executive of Hardy Oil & Gas, could be in line for a £570,000 pay-off, following what amounts to a £340 million takeover of his company.

Mr Walsley, who is on a salary of £285,000 a year, leaves with a two-year contract which will be bought out.

Alan Gagner, chief executive of British Borneo, will take the helm of the new combined group, to be named British Borneo Oil & Gas.

Mr Gagner admitted that

some jobs would be lost in London when the two companies move into one headquarters. But he insisted the tie-up was not driven by cost savings. "Putting together the companies will give us greater resilience and enable us to accelerate our strategic aims."

But industry experts said the takeover, which follows the merger between British Petroleum and Amoco, was to counter the impact of crude prices which languish at ten-year lows.

British Borneo's interim net profits were more than halved to \$3.6 million, while Hardy produced a first half-year loss of £1.33 million.

Under the deal, Hardy shareholders will receive six new British Borneo shares for every seven Hardy shares held. British Borneo will hold 63 per cent of the combined group.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.726	Germany 2.758	Malaysia 6.42	Singapore 2.54
Austria 16.36	Greece 4.755	Malta 0.63	South Africa 16.25
Belgium 37.22	Hong Kong 12.59	Netherlands 3.103	Spain 235.58
Canada 2.464	India 1.570	New Zealand 3.14	Sweden 12.61
Cyprus 0.81	Ireland 1.096	Norway 12.35	Switzerland 2.7
Denmark 10.59	Israel 6.50	Portugal 261.15	Turkey 445.980
Finland 8.49	Italy 2.742	Saudi Arabia 0.16	USA 1.6880
France 6.2378			

Supplied by NatWest (excluding rupee, shilling and riyal)

Commonwealth Games

David Hopps sees the British off the pace as the All Blacks triumph in the Sevens

England let chance go to ground

Rugby Union

WHEN England won the inaugural World Cup Sevens five years ago, they might have been expected to embrace a form of rugby union that had offered them a brief flicker of supremacy against the southern hemisphere nations. Such glorious days, after all, do not come along very often.

Instead, England's attitude to Sevens has been indifferent, even distrustful, as they have imagined the disturbance it might cause in a crowded schedule. The southern hemisphere has not only resisted its control, it has recognised the value of Sevens in enhancing its approach in the 15-man game.

New Zealand, who barely survived the challenge of Samoa in the semi-finals, took gold when they defeated the favourites Fiji 21-12 in the final. A restoration of pride after their unprecedented run of five successive recent Test defeats.

Their celebrations included the statutory haka, which on a sultry night was delivered to a cheering crowd of 10,000. Four female English spectators had earlier been allowed less licence. Raising T-shirts emblazoned with the slogan "Studs at our feet" above their heads, to expose their bras, they were quickly ejected by police from the Petaia Stadium.

England's interest ended in the quarter-finals, with a 49-12 defeat by the eventual bronze medallists Australia, after which David Campese, a veteran winger relishing another last hurrah, branded them as "a disgrace" for not sending a stronger side to the Commonwealth Games because of club commitments. The main obstacle was an agreement between Twickenham and the clubs that only eight weekends should be used for international duty.

Campese had virtue on his side, although most condemnation should be reserved for English cricket which, through either conceit or dim-wittedness, declined to send a team at all on the excuse of a heavy international schedule and a hectic climax

to the county season, somewhat contradictory excuses. As John Pullin famously remarked in 1972, when England lost against Ireland in Dublin when the Troubles caused other home nations to cancel: "At least we turned up."

Chris Sheehy, England's captain, and a member of that victorious 1993 Sevens side, was the sole international in a squad predominantly reserve team players selected on a basis of beg, steal and borrow. Sheehy, who missed the Australia game because of a bruised thigh, remains frustrated that Sevens rugby continues to play such a limited part in England's development.

"It is difficult to incorporate, I don't need to be told that," said the Harlequins forward, "but South Africa, New Zealand and Australia have all managed it. I'd like to see top English players fighting harder to come. Sevens demands cohesiveness and the need to understand not just the team's pattern of playing but to be sympathetic to the instinct and body language of every individual."

England, totally overpowered, conceded seven tries, three to the heavy-duty sprinting of Rick Mahe, who is credited with a time of 10.20sec for the 100 metres. Only Mike Friday, the Wasps scrum-half, survived the examination, although Nick Baxter, a record try-scorer for Worcester last season, possessed enough strength to hand-off Australian tacklers for two tries.

Wales fared little better, losing 38-14 to New Zealand at the quarter-final stage. Jonah Lomu scored three tries, barging through for the first, shunning past his would-be tackler for the second (not to be confused with the third) and barge straight through him (seemed a humanitarian act) and walking in for the third.

Geraint John, the Wales coach, rated this his team's best performance of the tournament, and explained a dramatic 45-7 defeat against Canada the previous day with the usual defence of poor preparation. "Our minds were still set on 15-man rugby," John said, which particularly in Wales's case, does not strike one as a very advisable place to start.



Backwards to victory... Giam Rooney, in lane seven, starts her successful quest to add to Australia's medal tally in the 100m backstroke final at the Commonwealth pool. Her team-mate Meredith Smith was third

Badminton

England win after tie ends in knots

Richard Jago

ENGLAND'S women were delighted to win the gold medal but they were not entirely satisfied with the strange circumstances which saw them triumph following their only defeat of the tournament.

England's 3-2 defeat by India created a three-way tie between the two and Malaysia. England and Malaysia were level both on match wins and on individual wins within a match.

But England were eventually proclaimed winners be-

cause they had won the match between themselves and Malaysia.

It was a sufficiently confusing end to warrant reverting to a knock-out system from the semi-finals onwards in Manchester in 2002.

Despite the somewhat unsatisfactory finale England's head coach Asger Madsen was understandably pleased.

"The work and the improvement they have made is tremendous," he said, adding, "including the singles players." This was not entirely official-speak to preserve coach-player

relations, but nevertheless it had been the considerable abilities of Jo Goode and Donna Kellogg and of Sara Sankey and Jo Davies, in England's traditionally strong event, which enabled them to survive.

It was defeats in the men's singles, also to India, also in a 3-2 defeat, which did far more damage. They effectively ended hopes of a silver medal, and a one-sided 4-1 defeat by Malaysia later in the day only emphasised the gap in class.

Even without their best player, Ong Ewe Hock, Malaysia won the tournament without conceding a match.

the one which England picked up at the very end being conceded because the home country tired of the fray and preferred to get on with the business of collecting the medals.

England took bronze but will remember the fine match Peter Knowles played and lost 15-5, 13-15, 15-13 to Abhinav Shrivastava. One flick lift from the Indian's backhand landed one inch out and prevented Knowles from getting to match point, probably cost him the contest and changed the colour of the medals England received.

Steven Downes sees success in the pool overwhelmed by a gold-and-green tide

O'Neill in gold rush as Aussies rule the waves

Swimming

ENGLAND'S swimmers had a very good day in the pool yesterday, winning two more silver and two bronze medals in the wake of another tidal wave of Australian gold.

Only the victory by Canada's Mark Vandell in the 200 metres backstroke last night ended a sequence of 10 successive renditions of Advance Australia Fair.

The relief was brief, though. In the next race, the women's 4x100m freestyle relay, Susie O'Neill brought the Australians home in first place for the 12th time so far in these Games, though they needed to break the Commonwealth record to defeat the English quartet of Sue Rolph, Claire Huddart, Karen Legg and Karen Pickering. The Englishwomen's 3min 43.05sec took 2.10sec off the British record.

Nothing, it seems, can stop O'Neill's relentless progress towards all manner of Commonwealth firsts.

That relay gold, plus the 400m freestyle gold she collected after out-reaching England's Vicki Horner for the wall earlier in the evening, took her personal tally in Kuala Lumpur to four and her overall tally of Commonwealth golds to eight, a total no other swimmer has ever matched.

O'Neill, 25, plans to marry her fiancé, Cliff Harley, on her return to Brisbane after the Games, and could yet have another three golds in her trousseau.

The record at a single Games is five golds, won by another Australian swimmer, Hayley Lewis, in Auckland eight years ago. O'Neill seems certain to at least match that because she has yet to race in the 200m butterfly, the event at which she is the Olympic champion.

O'Neill's victory in Atlanta was a rare occasion because she was the only woman at the Olympics who managed to win a race that included Michelle Smith. Yet even the

disgraced Irish woman failed to make O'Neill work as hard for her reward as Horner did last night.

Going into the final two lengths, O'Neill was a body-length ahead of Horner, the 22-year-old who trains at Stockport. Despite reducing the gap in the last 10 metres, Horner would probably have needed to be wearing false fingernails to have won.

Gavin Meadows won bronze for England in the 100m freestyle, finishing behind the Australians Michael Klim and Chris Fyler.

For Klim, winner of four world titles in Perth earlier this year, the race was important after some below-par individual performances. Yet it was Meadows, 21 last week, who displayed the greatest delight on realising his achievement.

While Klim and Fyler quietly congratulated one another over the lane ropes, Meadows heaved himself out of the water to punch the air.

Still no Briton has ever broken 50sec for 100m — the benchmark of world class — but by swimming a personal best 50.14sec, Meadows believed that he has now established himself as a force to be reckoned with. "For so long now, I've been categorised as a relay swimmer," Meadows, who trains at Leeds, said. "Now they'll have to take me seriously."

England's other bronze went to Gayle Adamson in the individual synchro final.



O'Neill... pieces of eight

Athletics

Fredericks change of heart raises the sprinting stakes

FRANKIE FREDERICKS has reversed his decision to pull out of the Commonwealth Games and may run in the 100 metres, a Namibian team official said yesterday.

"Frankie contacted me and indicated that he now wished to take part in the Games," said Gerhard Roux, the secretary general of the Namibian Olympic Committee.

"He will only decide which events he will run once he gets here. There's a chance he will run the 100m. It's his decision."

Fredericks will arrive in Kuala Lumpur in time to run in the 100m heats tomorrow after winning the 200m and

coming second in the 100m at the World Cup in Johannesburg over the weekend.

The Olympic silver medalist at both distances withdrew from the Games after his Prime Minister suggested that he may not be Namibia's greatest sportsman because he has never won a gold medal.

At Olden of Trinidad and Tobago, Thompson of Barbados, the two fastest men this year, are expected to push each other to a quick time in Thursday's 100m final and Frederick's presence would heighten expectation that the world record could even be beaten.



Jonah swallows Wales... Lomu in full cry

Round-up

Johnson upsets Eyles to set up semi-final with Nicol

ENGLAND'S Paul Johnson caused a surprise in the men's pool by defeating the world champion Rodney Eyles 9-2, 10-3, 9-1 to reach the semi-finals, writes Richard Jago.

"I set myself a target of reaching the semi-finals and getting a medal. I think I can get a silver or gold," said Johnson, who today faces Scotland's world No. 1 Peter Nicol.

Eyles, who won his world title in Kuala Lumpur 10 months ago, made too many mistakes. The other semi-final is between Alex Gough of Wales and Canada's Jonathan Tower.

Northern Ireland and Wales gained their first

medals of the Games, both coming in the men's pairs full bore rifle shooting.

Martin Millar and David Calvert struck gold for the Irish, scoring 299 points to top the Canadians James Paton and Alain Marion and David Davies and Chris Hockley of Wales by one point. But the Welsh pair had to settle for bronze with the Canadian silver and the silver on a countback.

Phil Scanlan and Neil Day won silver for England in the pairs free rifle prone, while Rebecca Spicer and Louise Minnet took bronze in the women's air rifle. In the ten-pin bowling mixed doubles, England's Pauline Buck and Richard

Hood led gold alip through their hands. They had led in the morning but were overtaken by the Australians Cara Honeychurch and Francis Ryan in the afternoon. However, there was a silver lining.

Sri Lanka reached the cricket semi-finals, beating Zimbabwe by one wicket in a dramatic finale. With four over left the World Cup holders needed three runs to overhaul Zimbabwe's total of 265 for seven with three wickets left.

Then Heath Streak took two wickets in successive balls, but he could not complete the hat-trick and Indika De Silva (75 not out) saw Sri Lanka home.

Wales were beaten 6-3 by India, which virtually ruled out any chance of their reaching the semi-finals. They were 4-1 down after 28 minutes. Dhanraj Pillay leading the way for India, but they doggedly fought back to 4-3 with corner goals from Dave Hacker and Simon Organ, who scored two.

The fate of the England men's side will be decided in the next 24 hours. They face severe tests from the two teams above them in their group, meeting the hosts Malaysia this morning and Pakistan tomorrow. Malaysia will have a capacity 14,000 crowd behind them and, under the German coach Paul Lissak, are greatly improved.

England's women, leaders of their group, should move a step nearer a semi-final spot today by defeating Canada.

Hockey

Nicol leads South Africa to historic win

Part Rowley

SOUTH AFRICA caused the first upset of the hockey tournaments by recording their first ever victory over India, the men's favourites, by 3-2.

Greg Nicol, who scored so many goals in his last season with Surbiton a year ago, confirmed that he is one of the world's most lethal strikers with his fifth goal of the Games to put South Africa ahead. After Australia had levelled, Murray Anderson, soon to return to St Albans, added South Africa's second and Justin King of Chelmsford the third.

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Kuala Lumpur results

Badminton

Men's singles: 1. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 2. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 3. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 4. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 5. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 6. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 7. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 8. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 9. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 10. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 11. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 12. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 13. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 14. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 15. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 16. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 17. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 18. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 19. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 20. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 21. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 22. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 23. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 24. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 25. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 26. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 27. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 28. S. Pradyumn (IND) 15-7, 15-12; 29. S. 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Racing

Ken Oliver on the rejuvenated sprinter who has piled on the weight but remains favourite for the Ayr Gold Cup

Darley in hot seat on Cadeaux Cher

THE REMARKABLE Cadeaux Cher will have a new jockey when he attempts to defy a 7lb penalty in Saturday's Ladbroke Ayr Gold Cup. Kevin Darley comes in for the plum ride as Ray Cochrane, who has ridden Barry Hills's four-year-old to all his four victories this season, is unavailable.

Cadeaux Cher has already taken two big sprint handicaps in the past month. Ripon's Great St Wilfrid and the Tote Trifecta Portland at Doncaster, and his extra burden for winning last week's Portland means that he has risen 33lb in the ratings since a modest victory at Doncaster on July 30.

Hills practically wrote his sprinter off earlier in the season, describing him as being a cripple all his life.

"He just seems to be coming to himself," was the trainer's revised opinion of the gelding after his recent win.

Cochrane certainly struck up a wonderful understanding with Cadeaux Cher, whose big wins have been gained by a late dash inside the final furlongs, and Hills's make him 14-1 co-favourite for Darley to continue the winning run.

Tedburrow heads the 108 five-day declarations, but has been reported an unlikely runner by Eric Aston as a 7lb penalty for winning a Group Three race at Leopardstown last Saturday takes his weight up to 10st 1lb.

His absence would leave the handicap topped by Superior Premium, also on the 14-1 mark, who will be en route to Coastal Bluff in 1998 by adding the Ayr race to victory in the Stewards' Cup at Goodwood.

Richard Fahey, who trains Superior Premium, also has



Home alone... Pride Of Kashmir (Glen Torney) clears the last fence on his way to victory at Plumpton yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: JULIAN HERBERT/ALPAC

Eastern Purple, who was third to his stablemate at Goodwood, in the line-up and the Malton trainer cannot split them.

"Both horses are in great form and this race has been their target all year," said Fahey. "I want a high or a low draw for them. I don't want

them to be drawn in the middle."

Fahey completed his riding plans for the Ayr by charging by booking Jimmy Fortune for Eastern Purple, who is a 16-1 shot, and putting his apprentice Robert Winston on Superior Premium. "Robert rides Superior

Premium to take off 3lb as he looks like carrying top weight of 10st 11lb," said the trainer. Both horses run in the Group One Stanley Lelands Sprint Cup at Haydock last time with Superior Premium finishing fifth to Tamarisk and Eastern Purple seventh.

Other leading favourites include Ma-sha-1 and Lone Piper, recent winners at Goodwood and York respectively. Silver Patriarch and Ebdyia are 2-1 joint favourites for Saturday's Irish St Leger at The Curragh. When they meet in the Coronation Cup at

Epsom in June, John Dunlop's colt had Ebdyia one-and-a-half lengths back in third place. Kayi Tara, who ran on in game style to beat Double Trigger by a neck in the Ascot Gold Cup, adds spice to this intriguing race and is quoted at 11-4.

Yarmouth card with form guide

TOP FORM	TOP FORM
2.05	2.35
2.40	2.45
2.50	2.55
3.00	3.05
3.10	3.15
3.20	3.25
3.30	3.35
3.40	3.45
3.50	3.55
4.00	4.05
4.10	4.15
4.20	4.25
4.30	4.35
4.40	4.45
4.50	4.55
5.00	5.05
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SportsGuardian

Robert Armstrong says Twickenham is set for a new row with the home unions

Lions tours threatened by England reluctance

ENGLAND has set itself on a collision course with the other home unions by insisting that Lions tours should take place every six years instead of four, as now. The Premiership clubs, who hold the contracts of players, are reluctant to release their players for lengthy periods on top of their heavy England commitments and the management board of the Rugby Football Union is to consider trying to force a reduction in frequency of Lions tours when it meets next month.

The RFU's national playing committee, chaired by Bill Beaumont, the former England captain, says it will "reserve the right to participate" in future Lions tours if it is unable to reach agreement with the other unions on a six-year plan, which would not affect the Lions' 2001 tour to New Zealand and Australia.

The playing committee, which also includes the clubs' representative Peter Wheeler and the England coach Clive Woodward, believes the southern hemisphere nations have far more to gain than England from Lions tours in financial and competitive terms. Scotland, Ireland and Wales are keen to keep the four-year cycle. "It is hard for England to pursue its own development programme when two out of every four years are taken up by the World Cup and a Lions tour," said Doo Rutherford, the RFU director of rugby.

"We have to reappraise the whole situation and come up with a compromise if we hope to preserve Lions tours. We know the tours are popular in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa and we are keen to continue a fine tradition but change is necessary to do that."

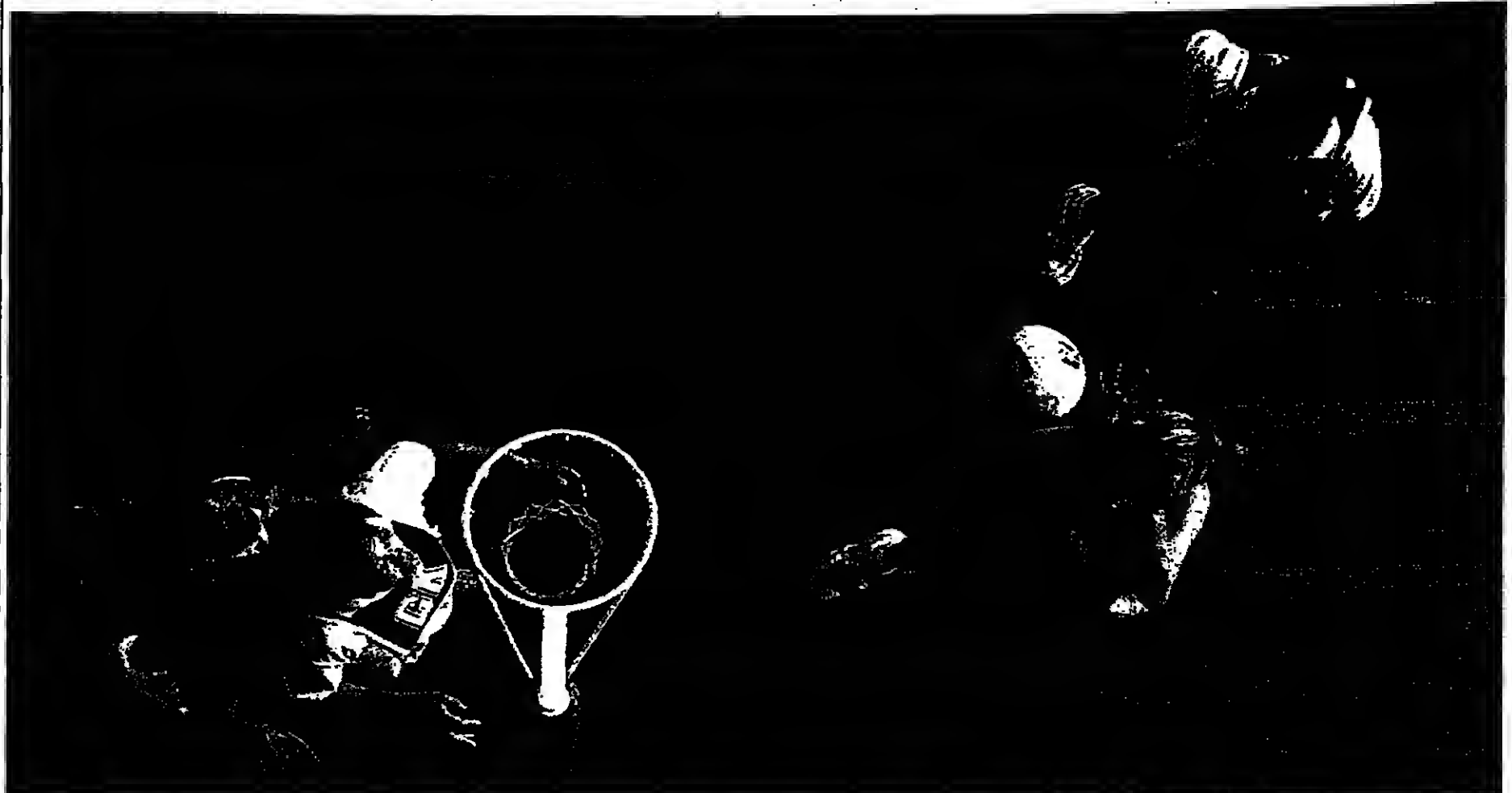
England's take-it-or-leave-it approach will run full tilt into a wall of Celtic opposition. The RFU's six-year plan is deemed to be given short shrift by the Six Nations Committee whose Scottish chairman Allan Hogg dismissed it as "ridiculous". Rutherford admitted: "There is no doubt that the three other unions will stick with the four-year cycle."

Ian McGeechan, who has coached the Lions to Test series wins against Australia and South Africa, insists the four-year cycle should be kept to give players experience of "the highest quality rugby they can play".

As Northampton's director of rugby, McGeechan has often had to juggle the conflicting demands of his country for his leading players but he firmly believes that "if the Lions are managed properly the benefits will filter down to each of the unions taking part".

He explained: "In New Zealand and South Africa the Lions are regarded as a bigger team than any one country. As Lions our best players gain immensely from competing in such an intimidating and challenging environment."

Surfing the net



High anxiety... Katherine Jones shoots for Wales in their 58-59 draw with the Cook Islands as netball makes its first appearance at the Commonwealth Games PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE HENMITT

Villa ready to pay £16 million for Shearer

Peter White

JOHN GREGORY, the Aston Villa manager, is prepared to break the British transfer record to try to persuade Newcastle United to sell Alan Shearer.

Gregory is already believed to have had preliminary talks with the Newcastle manager Ruud Gullit

about a deal that would be in excess of the £15 million Blackburn Rovers received when the England striker moved to St James' Park in July 1996.

Although Gullit has publicly stated that he wants Shearer to stay, he did not rebuff Gregory's private approach. Gregory will step up his move when he meets Shearer's adviser Tony Stephens after Villa's

Uefa Cup first-round tie against Stromsgodset at Villa Park tonight. If he receives sufficient encouragement, then the Villa manager will follow up his inquiry with a firm offer of £16 million.

The fee would not present a problem to Villa. They recently received £12.5 million from the sale of Dwight Yorke to Manchester United and, although Greg-

ory spent £8.75 million on Paul Merson only last week, he still has around £20 million at his disposal. Shearer has continually been linked with a move to the Continent but it is thought that his wife Lalyna, whom he met while playing for Southampton, would prefer him to remain in the Premiership.

The couple have two daughters, one who attends

school and the other who goes to nursery school, and they are worried about disrupting their education. Gregory went on record only last week as saying he would love to have Shearer in his Villa team and that, if Michael Owen was regarded by the England coach Glenn Hoddle as the No. 1 striker in the country, then Shearer was next best.

"I would love him in my team — he is the England number nine," Gregory had said. "Suggestions of him being in decline after his injury are rubbish." The Villa manager is prepared to let his £4 million-rated goalkeeper Mark Bosnich move to St James' Park as part of any deal and would accept around £4 million for his former England striker Stan Collymore.



Jim White

Tickets going begging in the box at Old Trafford

ANYONE glancing into the directors' box at Old Trafford on Saturday afternoon will have seen empty seats, dozens of them. Of the 220 places available, only 122 were filled, or so I am told by a United Krenilologist, who, enervated by the so-called fare available out on the pitch, took it upon himself to conduct a head count.

Now the directors' box at Old Trafford is one of the swankiest freebies in football, a place generally so crammed with those wishing to see — and more importantly to be seen — that Kate Moss would have diffi-

culty squeezing in. But on Saturday 98 of the usual suspects were out there — we know it was the regular United followers missing because Coventry confirmed they took up all but two of their allocation — and this despite the added attraction of spotting Ulrika Jonsson taking her position among the gaggle of celebs with whom Martin Edwards likes to surround himself.

It does not take a conspiracy theorist to work out why there were the empty acres. The local Manchester establishment are embarrassed by this Murdoch business. For the moment they would prefer not to make a public show of whose side they are on.

One can understand why they are embarrassed. Wider feeling in Manchester is overwhelmingly against the bid. True, there are those who ring phone-ins to say it is going to be great with Murdoch in charge, because once Alex Ferguson will be able to buy Kluyvert and Salas and bow United will win the title every year until the end of the next millennium. But casting aside whether there is any real spectator satisfaction in buying perpetual success, this fantasy argument can easily be dismissed by a look at the figures.

The amount BSEYB will be obliged to fork out to own the organisation precludes any

possibility of major investment. At a conservative estimate it will cost the company £50 million a year in interest payments alone to bankroll its £65 million takeover.

Last year MUFPC made a post-tax profit of £19 million. To turn that into a sum big enough to absorb the extra debt charges will take a lot of replica shirt sales.

Still, there is one easy revenue-raising start they can make. Saturday's match programme boasted that ticket prices at Old Trafford are below average for the Premiership. Not for long.

THERE are those, too, who wonder why the fuss; what difference will it make? The club is already in the grip of Mammon; it is not exactly a charitable institution as it stands.

That is true enough, sadly, but Murdoch is a uniquely different proposition in club ownership both morally — let no one in football forget that he is the proprietor of a paper which traduced the memory of 96 innocent people who died at Hillsborough — but also politically.

His ownership of United will give him unassailable power in dictating the future shape of the game in his interests. If it did not, he would not bother. And that should worry

everyone interested in any other club.

The embarrassed 98 who went missing on Saturday presumably appreciate all this. Indeed, embarrassment is an important weapon those seeking to stop the Murdoch takeover are keen to use — not just attempting to persuade minor shareholders that, if combined together, they have a voice but also seeking to exploit the Government's dilemma on this issue.

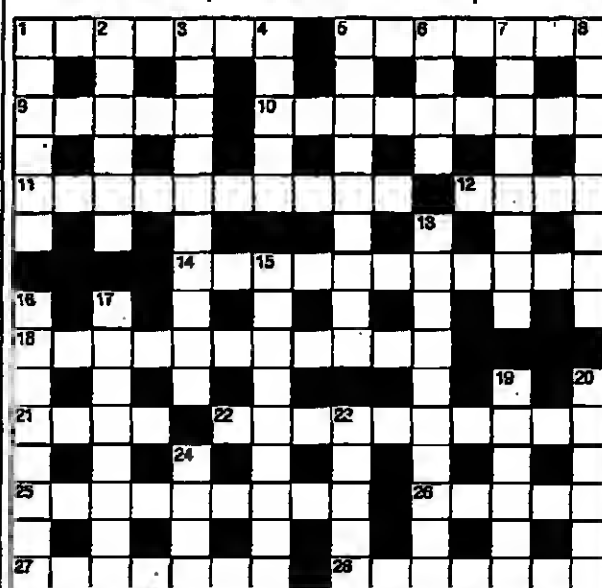
The politics of the United takeover are fascinating. On the one hand this Government constantly makes a populist show of being crammed with grass-roots football fans; on the other, its leading members have shown themselves even bigger supporters of Rupert Murdoch's power and influence. The more opponents of the takeover can ask them awkward questions, the more it must propel the Cabinet into referring the bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The highest-profile United fan in the Government, the Foreign Office minister Tony Lloyd, has been despatching quiet about the affair. Anyone who can answer why that is can win a ticket to the Old Trafford directors' box. There are plenty spare right now.

Takeover fever grows, page 5

Guardian Crossword No 21,380

Set by Chifonie



Across

- 1 John old vessel becoming ship's guide (7)
- 5 Old city introduced to tropical tree producing strong drink (7)
- 9 It's more boring having less alcohol (5)
- 10 Start to speak having taken one drink (5)

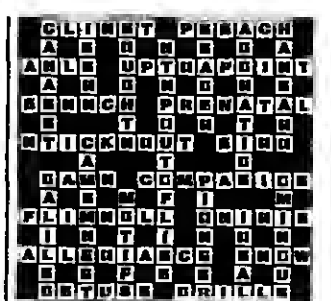
Down

- 11 Diagnostic tool is Tom's preserver (3,7)
- 12 Filmed drunk outside hotel (4)
- 14 One way to make stretcher for clothing (5-6)
- 16 Part of restraint for perrot that's disturbed (5-6)
- 21 Giant accepts new medal (4)
- 22 Haze's annual increase, for example, could be wrong. Right? (6,4)

- 25 Moira runs wild discovering stars (4,5)
- 26 Travel across great mountain range (5)
- 27 Occupiers moving article into temporary accommodation (7)
- 28 Blackmail with former wrongs (7)

Down

- 1 Corrupt French noble found in bishopric (6)
- 2 Pilot had a meal by way of introduction (6)
- 3 A religious man about to throw away a medal (5,4)
- 4 Understood king prevailed over knight (5)
- 5 Cheat agent supporting Greek character (9)
- 6 A bird Ananias raised (4)
- 7 Card sharp, losing wager, finally arranged a place to doze (5,3)
- 8 Tree retained green colour by European pass (8)
- 13 Star in race holds up capitalized vessels to end decline (4,3,3)
- 15 Drunken sons touring Herts town without complications (2,7)
- 16 Identification required in accident in sports outing (4,4)
- 17 Piano's changed to a relative (8)



- 19 Spool providing more room round pole (6)
- 20 Fearome woman is to get on without public relations (6)
- 23 It's less satisfactory to argue about the London area (5)
- 24 Love one's country (4)

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WE'D RATHER BUY THE GAME THAN THE CLUB.

FC Kosice v Liverpool. UEFA Cup. Live tonight only on Channel 5 from 6.45pm.

